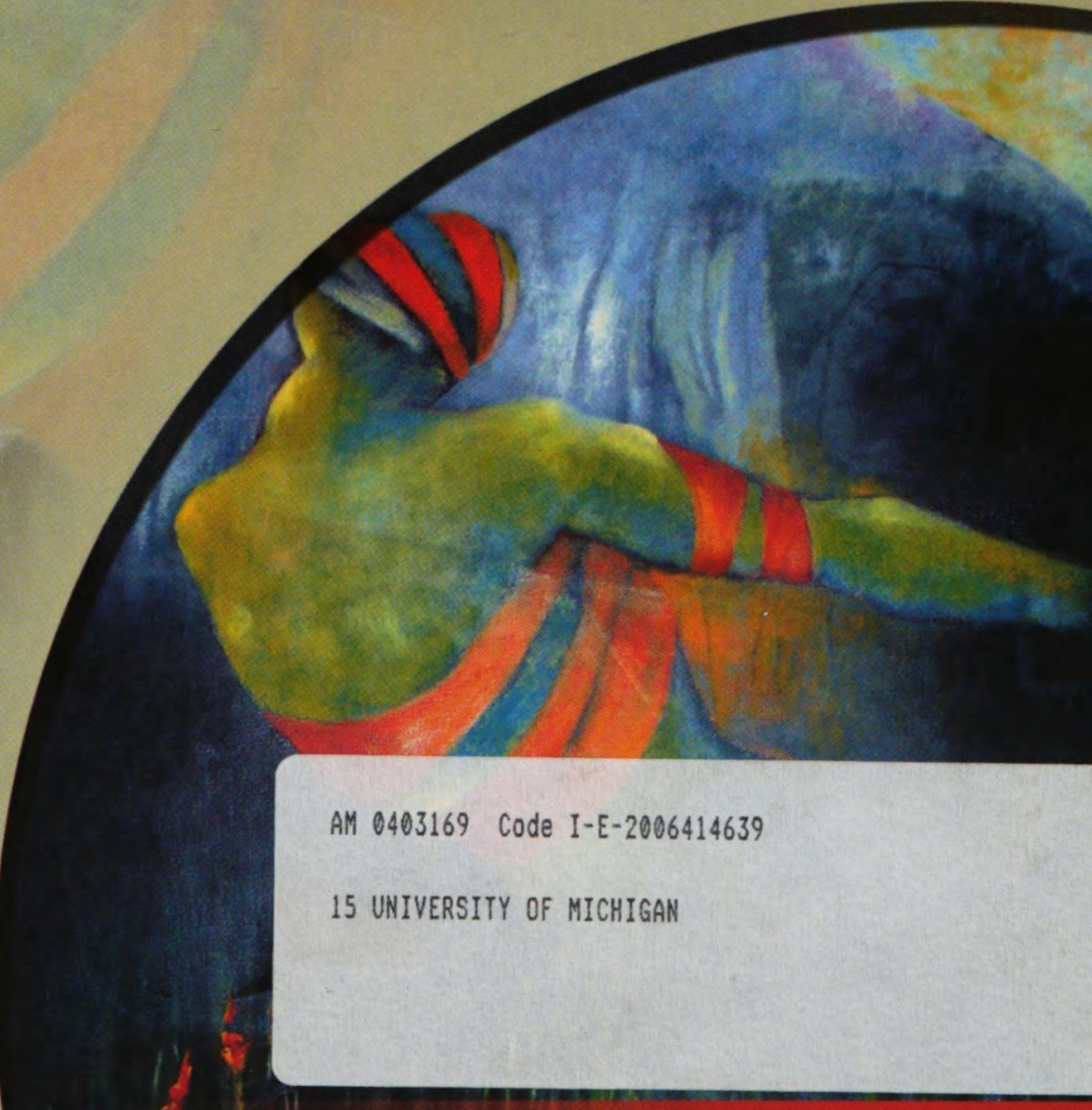
KASHMIR REDISCOVERED

THE VICISSITUDES OF KASHMIR'S HISTORICAL INDIVIDUALITY & ASSERTION OF KASHMIRI PERSONALITY



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DR. ABDUL AHAD

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To my parents:
The real upholders of genuine Kashmiri tradition who always encouraged me in my relentless endeavours to rediscover Kashmir

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CONFESSION

This book was conceived in the corridors of power; the J&K Civil Secretariat where I served in different capacities (as Additional Secretary, Special Secretary, Secretary and Commissioner Secretary) for a pretty long time and came in contact with the politicians who ruled the State by virtue of their close proximity to Delhi *Darbar* rather than their innate ability or any mass support . For about two decades their rip-roaring attitude, their stupidity, their flamboyancy, their infamy and their gross hypocrisy held me a captive, not allowing me to even venture too near the edge of sympathy to empathize with the victims of their insincerity and deceit; and their anti-Kashmiri policies — which they continue to perpetrate to promote India's political and military hegemony and its *Hindutva* consciousness in Kashmir— had completely tied my hands, sealed my lips and rendered me dumb to witness mutely the genocide of Kashmiris; the humiliation and indignity of mothers and sisters, and the sad plight of disabled persons, orphans and widows, and constant pain and consternation of families whose dear ones have mysteriously disappeared while in the custody of Occupation Force. The memories of these unforgettable events together with heart-rending sights of ridiculous military crack-downs, humiliating identification parades, inhuman interrogation methods, fake encounters, custodial killings, massacre of innocent civilians, rapes and human rights violations, prolonged incarceration of freedom fighters and torture of innocent Kashmiris continue to haunt me and fill me with remorse for having observed silence at a critical juncture when the Kashmiris needed moral support to withstand the pressure of Indian terrorism which, as usual, thrives on the inglorious role of the native political elite; the henchmen of Colonial Occupation Force who are quite unconcerned with what happens to the Valley's teeming millions and instead remain too preoccupied with their personal aggrandizement, power and money.

The presentation of this book (Vol. 1) is, therefore, an attempt to perform my ablutions and wash sins of my silence which I observed as a bureaucrat during those tiring days of turbulence in Kashmir.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In this book I have followed the story of Kashmir since it took its shape as a kingdom in the womb of *Satisar* under the inspiring leadership and guidance of Nila Nag, the father of Kashmiri nation, through the rise and fall of monarchies, through hopes and despairs, through accomplishments and failures, through immaturity and naivety of leaders, through loss of independence, through assertion of the Kashmiri personality, through sacrifices of artisans and common Kashmiris. In preparing this book I was assisted by my son, Dr. Humayun, his fiancée, Er. Iram and my daughter Dr. Saba in whatever way they could. I immensely enjoyed the deep emotional association of these conscientious budding Kashmiris with this project and watched them with pride absorbing and appreciating the delicate nuances of Kashmir's historical individuality which I believe most of the promising Kashmiris like them are determined to uphold come what may.

I would be failing in my duty if I don't express my gratitude to my very young and dynamic nephews: Er. Parvaiz and Er. Jehangir who spared no pains to computerize the book during extremely severe winter when the normal life in Kashmir had come to a stand still, when there was no electricity, when there was nothing available excepting snow and cold. My wife Hafiza, a caring woman, had to bear the brunt of domesticity; she along with Gulam Nabi, a domestic help, made me feel all cosy in my *hamam* to complete the book without any hassle.

My thanks are also due to G. N. Shaida, Editor-in-Chief, *Wadi Ki Awaz*, Ved Basin (Chairman, *Kashmir Times*), Dr. Aga Ashraf Ali (Ex. Chairman BOSE), M.S.

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Being one time Director of Archives, Archaeology & Museums plus Research & Public Libraries I had access to classified documents and rare manuscripts: the erstwhile staff members of these institutions extended affectionate help, flicking out whatever material and rare photographs I required for the book.

2006 Dr. Abdul Ahad
Srinagar, Kashmir

PROLOGUE

The unprecedented spurt in the Kashmir's struggle for freedom, following mass upsurge and the launching of a fiercest armed combat in 1989 has brought the disputed status of J & K State into world focus; sharpening the ever growing interest of think-tanks all over to work out various formulas for its solution. But a well-proven peace initiative for a workable and permanent solution is possible only through a close analysis and thoughtful appreciation of delicate nuances of the complex problem.

It is not borderline that is the issue; Kashmir also feels profoundly protective towards its identity and culture, and zealously guards the frontiers of its heritage whose distinctive features clearly manifest a strong yearning for the appropriation of Kashmiri aspirations for an environment that guarantees a suitable accommodation for indigenous socio-political complexes, and recognizes the concept and legitimacy of its historical individuality.

What has contributed to the shaping of this individuality and to its scaling heights of maturity? Why did it deflate to yield to foreign Imperium and hegemony, which eventually tailored it to the needs of exploiters and oppressors who denied it even an honourable livelihood? Why did it finally choose to assert itself through the bites of bullets, the shrieks of widows, the shrilly screams of orphans and the blood of youth?

These and many more aspects of the Kashmiri personality are dealt with in this book in the perspective of history. Delving deep into the untapped source material, and sifting through the mass of archaeological, archival and other reliable evidence, this work endeavours to rediscover the roots of Kashmir's speciality and unravel its hitherto unknown secrets of unique accomplishments and unforgettable failures; of petty sanities and costly stupidities; of resounding victories and heavy defeats; of hopes and despairs; of satanic voices and angelic smiles; of pride and prejudice.

This book explains how Kashmiri naivety has been largely instrumental in constricting the political independence of Kashmir, and dispels doubts about crucially important events that facilitated the sacrifice of Kashmir's historical individuality at the altar of political profit and shifting paradigms of social morality, and, eventually, landed the whole nation of Kashmiris in the barren wilderness of strife, terror and dispute.

PART-I

THE EVOLUTION OF KASHMIR'S HISTORICAL INDIVIDUALITY—THE BURSTING OF *SATISAR*

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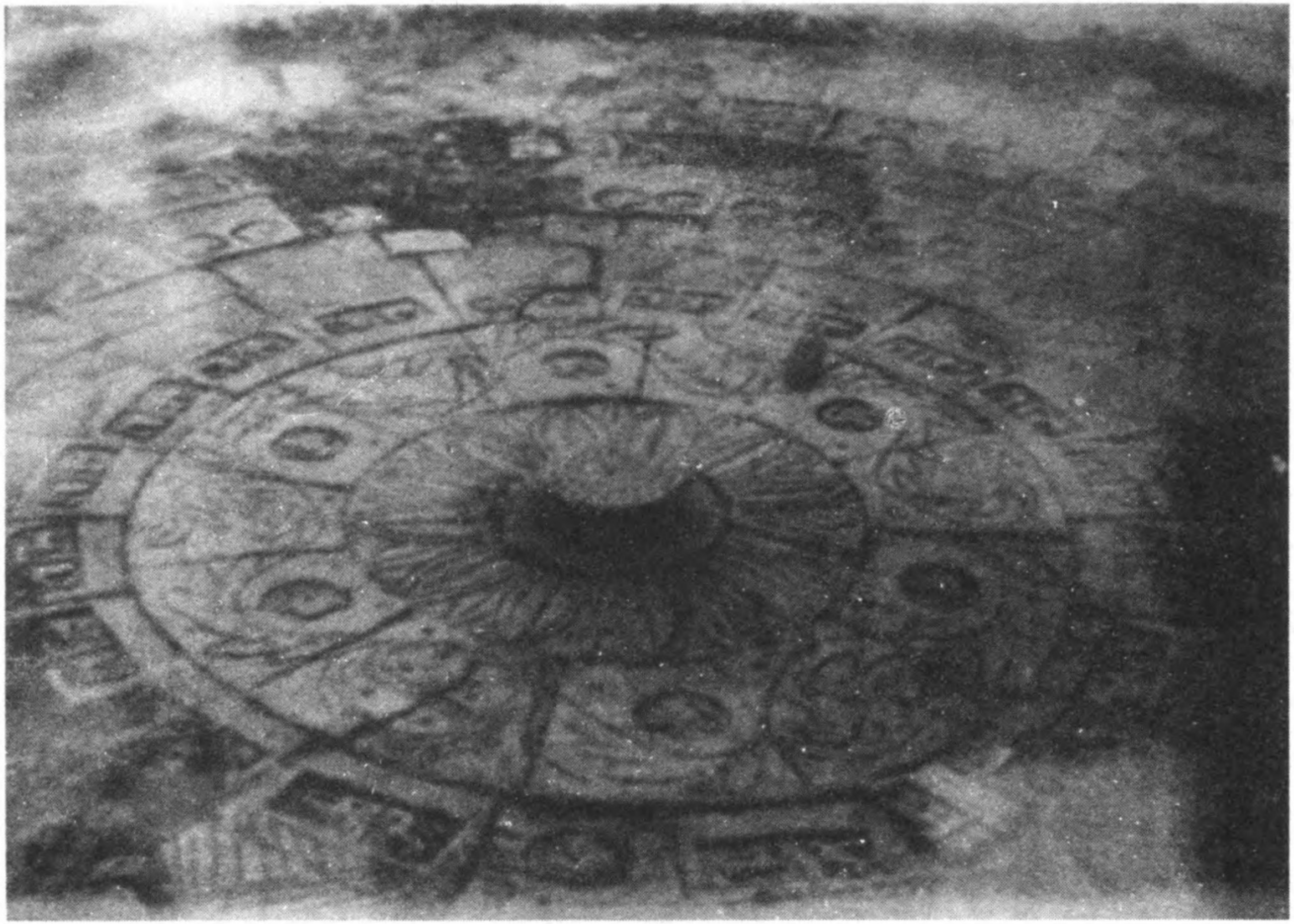
PART-I

THE EVOLUTION OF KASHMIR'S HISTORICAL INDIVIDUALITY—THE BURSTING OF *SATISAR*



Terracotta tile pavement, Hutmur, Kashmir

The richly veriegated assortment of Kashmir's historical individuality is seen in the incompatibility of Kashmiri *Sita*, and Kashmiri *Gita* with their Indian counterparts; in the phallic worship and peculiar eating habits of the Kashmiri *Shaivites* who, unlike the Indian Hindus, take mutton, fish and garlicky diet with great relish and without any reservation; from the cupidity of Kashmiri *Bikshus* for women, wine, gambling and property; from the systematic demolition of temples and desecration of icons by the Hindu kings; from the ingenuity of Kashmiri street beggars who, during their begging errands, would frequently threaten to remove their testicles in full public view if denied alms; from the obsession of Kashmiri Muslims with ancient socio-religious complexes of the Valley that made them the victims of the scourge of Mughal and Punjabi disdain (*badzat* Kashmiri and Kashmiri *bepiri*) and from their conceptual ambiguities which manifested themselves into institutional patterns that inspired a *de facto* separation of politics and religion and persuaded the Kashmir Sultans not only to maintain a distance from the institution of *Khalafat* but also to promote inscriptions in *Sharda,* the script of non-Muslims, on the tombs of Muslims and liberally contribute to the construction of Hindu temples in the cities and towns.

—Dr. Ahad

The great natural ramparts which enclose Kashmir have assured to the land of *Sarada*, not only long immunity from foreign invasions but also a historical existence of marked individuality.

—M.A.Stein

....It [Kashmir] must have been a place of utmost notoriety from the very earliest ages. The fame of its wine, its women, and its verdant plains, must soon have extended to the deserts of Central Asia and other regions....... and the inhabitants of the parched

plains of Hindustan.... must soon have learned to regard it as a terrestrial Paradise....

—G.T.Vigne.

Lunar computation of thirteen months was used by the Hindus in the Valley; and the intercalary month, which it became necessary to interpose at the end of every three years, was called the Mala Masa, the foul or unhallowed month...

—G.T.Vigne

The Kashmirian....has created the source of an imaginary Ganges in the Gunga Bal. The scene of the abduction of Sita by Ravana, is laid in the forest beneath the peaks of Sita Sar, and the bursting forth of the fountains of Venemal [Vishnu or Narayun] and Kamul [lotus] at Martand, are attributed to the finding and breaking of a miniature mundane egg upon the plains of the Valley after its desication.

—G.T.Vigne.

In truth, the kingdom surpasses in beauty all that my warmest imagination had anticipated....The Kashmiris are celebrated for wit, and considered much more intelligent and ingenious than the Indians... In poetry and science they are not inferior to the Persians and they are also active and industrious.

—Bernier

There is no place where one can see a complete circle of snowy mountains surrounding a plain of anything like the length and breadth of the Kashmir Valley, for the main Valleys of Switzerland are like the side Valleys of Kashmir. And above everything there is not behind Switzerland what there is at the back of Kashmir.

—Young Husband

A CELESTIAL COMPROMISE — THE BIRTH OF A PARADISE

1

> There [in Kashmir] the rivers are free from dangerous and aquatic monsters, provided with warm bath-houses for the winter, and furnished with comfortable embankments [for descending] into the water.
>
> Out of respect, as it were, the sun does not burn fiercely during summer……
>
> Learning, lofty houses, saffron, icy water and grapes; things that even in heaven are difficult to find, are common there.
>
> —Kalhana

Nowhere else has nature been so generous in dispensing with its bounties, beauties, fragrances, and favours as in the Valley of Kashmir. It has thoughtfully rubbed its celestial hands against the surface area of the Valley to crease her into an impregnable fortification of mountain ramparts and eternal garden suburbs with plentiful supply of fresh water and air, and fertile soil that have helped her to develop institutions, customs, dialect and culture distinctly marked by their peculiarity. Gifted with a great geographical location, strategical protection, topographical and climatic distinction and cultural speciality, Kashmir has from early times moulded her personality in an individualised style that differentiates her from rest of the world; evoking admiration from one and all: friends and foes; royals and pelbians; spiritualists and atheists. Emperor Jehangir was so enamoured with the warm effervescent and historical personality of Kashmir that he could not resist praising her in a loud poetic tone:

Agar firdaus bar ru-e-zamin ast
hami ast o - hami ast o - hami ast

(If there is a Paradise on earth, it is this, it
is this, it is this.)

During his sojourn in Kashmir, when the Emperor was cruising around the flower beds of delightful gardens against the backdrop of hard but beautiful mountains, he expressed his passionate desire to his beloved queen, Noor Jehan of retaining the Paradise even if he lost whole of his Indian Empire. An ardent lover of nature, a romanticist, a poet, a scholar and a writer, Jehangir was certainly not flattering. He was revealing the truth; a glaring truth that sharply and ostensibly contrasted Kashmir with the rest of sub-continent. He was portraying Kashmir's historical individuality; a dominant reality which, as Stein puts it, separated her from the rest of India: [1]

> ... The great mountain-barriers around the Valley have until quite modern times isolated its population from the rest of India. This isolation has at all times exercised a decisive influence on the history of Kashmir...
>
> The great ramparts which enclose Kashmir, have assured to the 'land of *Sarada*' not only long immunity from foreign invasion, but also a historical existence of marked

> individuality. On this no lasting impression was left even by those periods when the Valley was under the sovereignty of great foreign dynasties. Kashmir history has hence always borne a distinct local character.

Bernier found this individuality even more different than his imagination had anticipated. Vigne traced it from the Kashmiri calendar with lunar computation of thirteen months; from the Kashmiri *Ganges*; from the Kashmiri *Sita* and *Ravan*; from the Kashmiri *Gita* (with more *shaloks* than that of India). He writes: [2]

> Lunar computation of thirteen months was used... in the Valley; and the intercalary month, which it became necessary to interpose at the end of every three years, was called the Mala Masa, the foul or unhallowed month....
>
> [The Kashmiri] Ganges [are] in the Gunga Bul. The scene of the abduction of Sita by Ravana, is laid in the forests beneath the peaks of Sita Sar, and the bursting forth of the fountains of Venemal and Kamul at Martund....

Kashmir's individuality is seen in the eating habits of its *Shaivites* who take mutton, fish and garlicky diet with great relish and without reservation; in the cupidity of Kashmiri *Bikshus* for women, wine, gambling and property (Kashmir had married *Bikshus* who owned houses and large estates); in the solemn fasts observed by the Pandits to press their demands;[3] in the *wupalhak* (wild growing vegetable) which was placed on the base of god's icon to express protest against the authorities;[4] in the unanimous rejection of the Manu's code of social stratification; in the systematic demolition of temples and the desecration of sacred images of gods and goddesses by the Hindu kings, and the construction of Hindu temples by the Sultans.[5]

It is seen in the Kashmiri Islam whose flame is feebly burning in the Valley and which accommodates: *nauful* (prayers held to invoke the blessings of dead saints), *khatam-i-sharief* (offerings which are wrongly being equated|compared with *zikir-bil-jehar*, a practice followed by the *Sufis*), *daesh* (tying of strings to shrines), and *awarad-i-fateh* (the Quranic verses) the morning recitation of which resembles that of *bajan* rather than *keertan* as generally presumed; customary law which takes precedence over the *Sheriat* law; *peer parasti* (saint worship), *khana damadi* (to take a boy as son-in-law to the bride's house); *deedar-i-Mo-e Moqadas* (viewing of Prophet's holy relic); the reverence shown to ancient spiritual complexes; and the Muslim tombs of medieval Kashmir which bear inscriptions in *Sharda*, the script of non-Muslims.[6]

Finding no contradiction between Islamic and non-Islamic cultures, Abul Fazal,[7] Jehangir[8] and Aurangzeb[9] made their own assessment of the situation which reads:

ilahi ba har khana ki me juyai tuand
wa ba har zuban ki me shinvam goyai

tu; kufr wa Islam dar rahat puyan
wahdahu la shirik la goyan
—Abul Fazal

(Inscription on a temple built by Akbar.)

God Almighty, wherever I go I find seekers after Thee, and whatever I hear is in praise of Thee. Both idolaters and Muslims tread Thine path alone, all uttering 'God is one and without partner'.

[Kashmiri Muslims] ally themselves with the Hindus and both give and take girls. Taking them is good, but giving them God forbid.
—Jehangir

[Kashmiri Muslims] are *bepir* (vicious) and *be-ta-miz* (lacking discretion.)
—Aurangzeb

The imprint of indigenous socio-religious complexes is so deeply entrenched in the Kashmiri society that the Punjabis remorsefully speak:

Kashmiri be peeri
na manja na piri

(Kashmiris, who are spiritually misguided, possess neither a cot nor a stool.)

And at one stage the Punjabis scorned them as 'bloody Brahmans' and exposed them to odium and ridicule of the radicals which, eventually, resulted in riots, through the villages and towns, that could be quelled after a great destruction of property and orchards.

Another glaring feature of Kashmir's individuality is that it has given its people the distinction of being the foremost in introducing the art of writing history in which the Indian mind on the whole was so 'conspicuously deficient'. It has made them, as William Moorcroft writes:[10]

> .... The most lively and ingenious people of Asia, and deservedly so...

The possession of an uninterrupted series of written records reflecting different facets of the Kashmiri life belies the Hegelian theory that there is no history available in any part of the Orient that could give an idea about the 'growth expanding in to a veritable political condition'.[11] Various transactions relating land and trade to which references are found in the writings of Ksemendra and the Persian chroniclers even point to the existence of conditions favourable to the growth of merchant's capital which controlled the relations between the artisans and the market.[12] Besides, the native ingenuity is manifest in terracotta tiles whose engravings proclaim Kashmiris the originators of the art of shawl weaving, transparent cloth and the loom.[13]

Even the Kashmiri beggars were known for their ingenuity. During their begging errands in the streets of Srinagar they would sound innovative by threatening to remove their testicles in full public view if denied alms by the passers-by.[14] The progeny of these beggars reached the pinnacle of their fame as politicians and kingmakers by dint of their hard work and innate ability in the beginning of the last century.

The features of their marked individuality so cling to the Kashmiris that they are easily distinguishable from others. They carry these along with them wherever they go.[15] These characteristics together with Kashmir's eternal beauty gave immense solace to Nehru from the anxieties of arid deserts and crowdy atmosphere of India and inspired him, like a passionate lover, to describe this diffraction unequivocally in these sensual, almost erotic words:[16]

> I wandered about like one possessed and drunk with beauty, and the intoxication of it filled my mind. Like some supremely beautiful women whose beauty is almost impersonal and above desire, such was Kashmir in all its feminine beauty of river and valley and lake and graceful trees. And then another aspect of this magic beauty would come into view, a masculine one; of hard mountains and precipices, and snow-capped peaks and glaciers, and cruel and fierce torrents rushing down to the valleys below. It had a hundred faces and innumerable aspects, ever-changing, sometimes smiling, sometimes sad and full of sorrow. The mist would creep up from Dal Lake, and like a transparent veil, give glimpses of what was behind. The clouds would throw out their arms to embrace a

> mountain top, or creep down stealthily, like children at play. I watched this ever - changing spectacle, and sometimes the sheer loveliness of it was overpowering and I felt almost faint. As I gazed at it, it seemed to me dream - like and unreal, like the hopes and desires that fill us and seldom find fulfilment. It was like the face of the beloved that one sees in a dream, and that fades away on awakening.

Outlining the main features of the Kashmiri personality, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru further states:[17]

> Do not think you are dealing with a part of U.P, Bihar or Gujarat. You are dealing with an area, historically and geographically, and in all manner of things with a certain background ..... We have to be men of vision and there has to be broad-minded acceptance of facts .....

Making this statement in the Indian Parliament on June 26, 1952, Nehru argued very plausibly for the recognition and appreciation of Kashmir as a separate historical, cultural, political and geographical entity thus.

During his sojourn in the Valley, Lawrence found the varied climate of Kashmir restoring health to invalids which the scorching heat of Indian plains had robbed them of. His every year's residence in the Valley disclosed some new charm and distinctive feature and flavour of the Kashmir's speciality.[18]

The special charm of Kashmir cannot 'be only because of its magnificent woods, the pure limpidity of its lakes, the splendour of its snowy mountain tops, or the happy murmur of its myriad brooks of sounding in the cool soft air. Nor it be only the grace or majesty of its ancient buildings..... One can not even say that it comes of the combination of art and landscape..... But what is found in Kashmir alone is the grouping of these two kinds of beauty in the midst of a nature still animate with a mysterious life, which knows how to whisper close to our ear and make the pagan depths of us quiver, which leads us back, consciously or unconsciously, to those past days (lamented by the poet)' when the world was young, when[19]

> *"Le ciel sur la terre Marchait et respiriat*
> *dans un peuple de dieux".*

Nowhere was, thus, this unique pageant and a brilliant display of geo-historical identity to be witnessed than in Kashmir. And it did not even bear a passing resemblance to the fragmented life that developed amidst arid conditions of India's heartland.

It has strongly buttressed the deep involvement of the Kashmiris in the local environment, and the sense of their identity, besides giving 'to the endogenous system of man-nature interaction a specific regional stamp' and leading to the 'weak induction of exogenous influences'. The Mughals, the Pathans, the Sikhs and the Dogras, who successively ruled Kashmir, have left no imprint on their character and Lawrence found the Kashmiris very much 'what they were in the times before the Mughal conquest linked the Valley with India.[20]The Kashmiris have, thus, continued to live with their own economic and social structure and their own religious shrines and institutional frame so distinctly that Lawrence had to suggest:[21]

> .... Kashmir is a peculiar country, which need not necessarily be administered.... by the strict pattern adopted in British India.... and what is good and necessary in the Punjab is dangerous and premature in this country.

For this distinctive phenomenon geography has certainly played a decisive role but history has pushed it into complications which have blurred its image and picture, leaving behind a legacy of great tribulation, despair and dispute.

Geography has been, infact, highly benevolent to Kashmir, providing it constantly with immunity from the fear of foreign incursions and unwelcome ingress. But it has been a great liability in so far as impregnability of its main passes—Zojila and Burzil in the north- east; Tosamaidan at Pir Panjal; Banihal and the route through Uri in Jehlum Valley—has inculcated the Kashmiris with fatalistic notions about life; coaxing them into letting them take things lightly and motivating them for reconciling with their difficulties, disparities and disabilities. Besides, "ample grazing for....sheep and cattle, fuel for the winter.... warm clothes, and sufficient manure for cultivation and the availability of nutritious food, fresh water" and salubrious climate have been chiefly enlarging their monotony and inertia; the principal bane of the Valley for ages together which rendered the Kashmiris virtually inert, tarpid and lazy enough to succumb far more easily to pantheism, monotheism, transcendentalism, secularism and radicalism. It was in consonanace with their oscillations and indolence that the history of Kashmir had to come to terms with wavering shades and beliefs to make dells for every 'god' and 'godess' (religious as well as political) of sufficiently varied opinions and movements. The story of these compromises is told with admirable lucidity by Kalhana and commences with his mapping of the contours of the Paradise and delineating its origin from the *Nilamat Purana* and, thus, attributing its birth to supernatural powers of sage Kashyapa and 'god' Vishnu who with the help of Balabhadra unlocked the drain and reclaimed the submerged land of Kashmir to make it habitable for the people. Kalhana Writes:[22]

> .... Formerly , since the beginning of the Kalpa , the land in the womb of the Himalayas was filled with water during the periods of the (first) six Manus (and formed) the lake of *Sati* (Satisara) ....That land is protected by Nila, the lord of all *Nagas*, whose regal parasol is formed by the circular pond (of the Nilakunda) with the *Vitasta's* newly rising stream as its stick.
>
> .... There Gauri, though she has assumed the form of the *Vitasta*, still keeps her wonted inclination. (For in her river shape) she turns her face towards the ravine (Gaha).
>
> .... To protect, forsooth , the *Nagas* who came (to seek shelter) afraid of Garuda, it has stretched out its arms high, above in the guise of mountain-walls....

The Valley was originally a vast lake with unmeasurable depth, goes the legend, where a water born demon, Jalodbhava lived and terrorized the *Nagas* (snakes who guarded the waters).[23] When the father of the *Nagas*, Kashyapa learnt about this, he approached Brahma and requested him for help which he extended very promptly through Vishnu and his brother Balabhadra who pierced the closed ring of mountains and drained the waters from the lake, *Satisar,* thereby, making the land free from the demon by killing him with disc. The whole episode encouraged Kashyapa to settle down in the dry Valley which was named after him.[24]

Though sounding like a figment of mythical imagination, the theme of this interesting story clearly delineats three important aspects of the ancients of Kashmir: one concerns the origin of their land from the deep waters of a vast lake; the other pertains to their liberation from the bondage of demon; third relates to their settlement in the Valley. Part first of the story has been confirmed by geologists beyond doubt by proclaiming that the Valley was essentially a lake which got dried through a long process of geological transformation. Part second refers to the ethnic cleansing of the *Pissacas,* whose chief persecuted the *Nagas*. Part third shows how the *Nagas* settled down in the dry Valley and established a socio-economic and religio-politico system that became the fountainhead of Kashmiri mind and personality, and continues to be the basis not only of the history of Kashmir but also of its linguistic frame; of its arts and crafts; of its culture and ethos; of its values and beliefs; of its [illegible] and etiquette also.

The linguistic make-up is as intrinsic to Kashmiri personality as arts and crafts and other aspects. Despite callous disregard of alien rulers and considerable apathy of local elites and authorities— who do not consider *Koushur* even worthy of study — the Kashmiri language has been an ideal vehicle of cultural expression of the people of Kashmir. Numerous idioms and proverbs so frequently and freely quoted by them symbolize the wit and wisdom and foresight and thought of their ancestors and, thus, signify the appropriation of a cultural heritage which validates both maturity and naivety of Kashmiri personality. Cutting across the time boundaries, these proverbs and maxims retain their pristine form and importance. Not having, thus, slaid into oblivion, they are as relevant today as they were in yester years for example:

Tsarin kathan na sood
Tsarin gagrain na rood
Tsarin tangan na dudh.

(In many words there is no profit;
with much thunder there is no rain;
with much lowing there is no milk.)

Tsupe gai rupsenz;
Gsia yai te sunsenz.

(One who can not hold his tongue?
can hold nothing in this world.)

Yeli piyi rud
Teli wathi rab.

(There is no smoke without fire.)
or
(When rain falls then comes mud.)

Mulan drot tah putran sag.
(He cuts the roots and waters the leaves.)

Kashmiri wisdom and thought which legitimize the concept of Kashmir's individuality draw their substance from the reservoir of humanism of Nund Rishi and Lal Ded which is far more enchanting than the physical beauty of Kashmir. It gives social content and purpose to this individuality and makes it more and more vibrant and luminous.

Other vital aspects of this heritage are: saffron, shawl, *samawar*, silk, *noon-chai* (salt tea), *phiran* (loose gown), *kangar* (fire pot), *wazwan* (feast), *hamam* (heating) etc; and art and architectural motifs which manifest a compact union of Kashmiri personality with the environment, both physical and social, obtaining in the Valley.

Having taken centuries together for their cultivation, these varied aspects serve to propagate the concept of Kashmir's historical individuality, and set the Kashmiris apart from rest of the sub-continent.

Thus, the process of forming Kashmiri personality and mind was not smooth; it was a long tedious struggle among the proponents of different views. Within the womb of Paradise the forces of history struggled relentlessly to shape the identity of Kashmir. The proponents of this identity fought for a pretty long time until they triumphed to articulate meticulously their ideas reflected in their institutions and culture. It is the history of these ideas and institutions, as against the story of mere kings and queens, that helps us to form a perspective of the Kashmiri personality; of its heart and mind; of its soul and blood; of its sentiment and substance; of its vice and virtue; of its naivety and maturity; of its failure and achievement.

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) Kalhana, *Rajtarangini* (Stein), Vol-I, p.30 & n.28.
2) That the Kashmiri *Gita* contains more *Shaloks* than that of India is clearly revealed by a close examination and comparative study of the two *Gitas.* G.T. Vigne, *Travels in Kashmir, Ladakh, Iskardo,*Vol.I pp. 52, 55.
3) Abdul Ahad, *Protests & Resistance Movements in Ancient Kashmir*, Studies of Kashmir Council of Research, Vol.IV, pp 26-27.
4) *Ibid.*
5) *Ibid*; also see chapter, *Of Pride & Prejudice*
6) These medieval tombs, bearing inscriptions in *Sharda, Arabic* and Persian, are found at the *Mazar* of Baha-ud-Din Sahib, Srinagar and Bijbehara, Anantnag.
7) Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari* (Blochman), introduction & note.
8) *Tuzk-i-Jehangiri* (R&B), Vol.II, p.181.
9) Vide R.K. Parmu, *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, p.436.
10) Vide Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p.273.
11) See Abdul Ahad, *Kashmir to Frankfurt*, p.142, n.1.
12) For details see *ibid*, pp.20, 90, 125 & Appendix "H"
13) *Ibid*,
14) See chapter, *Burzhome to Hutmur,* note 32
15) Walter Lawrence, *loc.cit*, p.273.
16) Nehru, Press Report, 1942.
17) *Selected works of Jawahar Lal Nehru*, Vol. 18, pp. 418-421.
18) Walter Lawrence, *loc.cit*, p.14.
19) Vide, R.C. Kak, *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, introduction.
20) Walter Lawrence, loc.cit, p.8.
21) *Ibid*, p.9.
22) Kalhana, *op.cit*, b, I, 25, 28-29, 31
23) *Ibid*, Vol.I, p.5 & n.25.
24) See Buhler's *Report,* p.37.

RAGS TO RICHES

2

> There Gauri, though she has assumed the form of the *Vitasta*, still keeps her wonted inclination.[For in her river-shape] she turns her face towards the ravine (*guha*), Just as [in her godlike form] she turns it towards [her son] kumara (*guha);* [in her river-shape] the mouths of the Nagas (*nagamukha*) drink her abundant water (*apitabhuripayah*), Just as [in her godlike form] her elephant-faced son [Ganesa] (*nagamukha*), drank her abundant milk (*apitabhuripayah*).[1]
>
> —Kalhana

Born in the womb of *Satisar*, a vast lake which through an incessant process of geographical transformation witnessed drain of its waters by the deepening of the Baramulla gorge, Kashmir developed its own socio-economic system in an environment that was adequately suited for the mobilization of the earliest hunting and gathering herds with primitive beliefs and rituals. This system was very simple, conveniently comparable to those of earliest hunting gathering tribes obtaining at various places in the world, and it continued to influence Kashmir's early organizational patterns till the advent of agriculture and domestication of animals which, eventually, made the Valley a conglomeration of village communities with a familial orientation.[2]

Essentially self-sufficient, these village communities had to shape their own organizational and institutional settings with capacities required to sustain these against the vagaries of time, and to flourish as a necessary framework for the emergence of Kashmir as a crossroad of civilizations. These institutions shaped the destiny of the Kashmiris and, eventually, enabled them to carve out for themselves a social structure based upon ethnic ties, besides politics, economics and religion.[3]

The village household version of early Kashmir was inherently uncurled and unsophisticated.[4] Its undifferentiated social order persuaded villagers to pursue multiple activities as subsidiary to agriculture and fashioned their beliefs, rituals, fears and superstitions that laid the basis for the formation of early religion of Kashmir. Since agriculture was pervasively dominant in the communities other activities including religion were subordinate to it. The goods for local use were produced in the households and shared commonly through barter system carried in festivals and fairs annually held in the villages which, besides providing entertainment to the participating villagers, fulfilled their religious urges and susceptibilities.[5] In such pursuits the State interference was not in the least.

It was with the effective distribution of water resources to facilitate the regular irrigation of fertile lands that the role of the State became more pronounced but least complex.[6] The State's responsibilities enlarged manifold in course of time in response to a notable increase in population and concomitant increase in the size of communities.[7]

The State played a significant role in bringing about integration of communities by arbitrating their mutual disputes arising out of sharing of common sources of water which had come under cloud due to gradual population explosion. Besides regulating the irrigation system and harmonizing the village communities with each other to form a common front vis-à-vis outside world, the State symbolized the realm of culture and religion built upon shared commitment to community service and the worship of forces of nature.[8] Priests who presided over the worship governed the State affairs. These priests, who were also chiefs, provided cultural, political and religious bases of the society and the most assiduous among them was assigned the authority of controlling these affairs.[9]

Genesis of this State with its territorial, social, political and administrative dimensions is traced in the sixth century A.D., literary source, the *Nilamat Purana* which refers to the process of reclamation of Kashmir from the waters of gigantic lake (*Sati*) to accommodate the first settlement of the *Nagas* under their patriarchal chief, Nila. Intrinsically of mythological value, highlighting the teachings of Nila and his achievements as a hero of the oppressed *Nagas*, this source narrates his resounding triumph over his rival, Jalodbhava and his accession to the throne of newly formed State. Nila, the first potentate and chief, established a splendid court with all the rituals and customs that were necessary for its sustenance, and enunciated expedients of State - policy that echoed the milieu of the times. Unfolding the level of his intellectual attainments and his organizing capabilities, this State-policy assiduously cultivated the support of his constituents and resulted in coalescing various social elements under the unified command of Nila, the first monarch of Kashmir.[10]

During the centuries succeeding the reign of King Nila, the State came to acquire a reputation for its maturity, confidence and magnanimity, reflecting itself in various departments that developed as its vital limbs to meet the requirements of the times in best possible manner. For their smooth functioning and bearing full responsibilities of the State to ensure the welfare of the people together with their social configuration and consolidation, these departments worked under certain procedures and principles and coordination as depicted in the ancient literary works of Kashmir . In formulating these procedures and principles, judicious use of intellect and prudence had gone through which was reflected in full measure by poets and writers of the time. From the writings of these early writers, it is conveniently gathered that the State was a beneficent institution that came into existence mainly for the protection of human life and for the better realization of its higher ideals through a network of its limbs, viz., territory, population, king, ministers, army, treasury and fort. The prosperity of this State entirely depended upon the cooperation and coordination of its components.[11]

Thus, the State in Kashmir came into being as a result of interaction of socio-economic forces and its expansion was necessitated by the ever-increasing population and resultant growth of village communities and urbanization that, eventually, added to its responsibilities; making the institution a complex grandiose version of a federation of cities, towns and villages under the control of a ruler.[12]

With the commencement of urbanization, an evolutionary tendency towards the emergence of cities, towns and markets, the State acquired a complex position. It was called upon to effect necessary structural changes in the society that, eventually, paved the way for bringing into blossom the institution of kingship.[13] Emanating essentially from the very fabric of older socio-economic environment of the Valley, this institution was vitally needed to:

1. foster the growth of urbanism;
2. defend the wider interests of cities and towns where market economy came into being to replace barter system;
3. promote social differentiation and complex division of labour, pre-requisites of social , cultural and religious refinement;
4. ensure a complete divorce between agriculturists and craftsmen;
5. widen the rural urban divide; and
6. bring about total subordination of religious priests to political authority.

The institution of kingship, thus, supplanted progressively the old redistributive economy of the village communities to make ample space for market economy and elaborate exchange system. The introduction of money facilitated exchanges between producers and consumers and, thus, gave tremendous impetus to trade and commerce that profoundly influenced art and culture, leading to the creation of new and sensuous artistic trends. These trends clearly reflected in the fashioning of figurative terracotta tiles of the third century B.C., which were unearthed at Harwan, Srinagar and Hutmur, Anantnag. Depicting Kashmiri women dressed in transparent cloth, and portraits of birds and animals respectively, these tiles are valuable indicators of refinedness and sophistication Kashmir had achieved during this period.[14]

The kingship as it developed in Kashmir attained a royal aura and dignity firmly placed within the domain of kingdom which drew its strength from palace administrators, servants and soldiers, besides religious leaders. These functionaries assisted the king in ensuring the prosperity of his subjects and in upholding peace against chaos throughout the kingdom.

The magnificence, luster, pomp and splendour of kingship are clearly manifested in historical literature produced by Kalhana, the illustrious poet historian of Kashmir. Unlike others he did not subscribe to the mythical view of its origin. Instead he believed in subtle interplay of cosmic and socio-economic forces that paved the way for the fulfillment of an individual's personality and obligation of *raja* to achieve the welfare of his subjects.[15]

Analyzing various aspects and reasons that contributed to subsequent events of ruthless abuse of this institution, Kalhana suggested some remedial measures to guard it against the growing tendency of acquiring overbearing attitude. In his own words the purpose of his writing was to 'furnish a medicine' to those kings who became either overbearing in the glories of their administrations or grieved at the adversity of the same.[16]

Another notable writer, Ksemendra went a step further. He prescribed proper and formal education in philosophy and through training in the art of administration for kings to make the institution more responsive to the needs of their subjects. The cultivation of spotless intellect through the study of philosophy and other allied subjects was, thus, an important feature of this institution in addition to truthfulness, valour and liberality.[17]

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) Kalhana, *Rajatarangni* (Stein), b, i, ii.
2) For the rural structure of the ancient Valley see *ibid*, Vols. I & II; Watters, *On Yaun Chwang*. I. According to Al-Musudi, there were 60,000 to 70,000 villages in Kashmir. See *Muraj-al-Dhuhab* (Barbier de Meynard & Pavet de Courteille), I, p.373. Marx states that these village communities were "based on possession in common of the land, on the blending of agriculture and handicrafts and on the unalterable division of labour". *Capital*, I, chapt, XIV, sec.4.
3) See Abdul Ahad, *Kashmir to Frankfurt*, pp.1, 56, 62, 76, 92.
4) *Ibid*, Appendex "H", &1-2 n.
5) *Ibid*.
6) *Ibid*.
7) *Ibid*.
8) See V.N. Drabu, *Kashmir Polity*, pp. 12-30
9) King Nila was essentially a priest, a "god", who presided over the worship and, subsequently, became a monarch. See *Nilamat Purana*; Kalhana, *op.cit*; V.N. Drabu, *ibid*, pp. 12-15.
10) *Ibid*.
11) *Ibid*. pp. 12-30
12) Abdul Ahad, *op.cit*; pp.121-22; Appendix, "I".
13) For kingship see V.N. Drabu, *op.cit*, pp. 36-37; Beni Prasad, *The Theory of Government in Ancient India*, p.15.
14) Abdul Ahad, *loc.cit*, pp. 4, 6, 9, 122. Also see Appendix- "D"
15) See Kalhana, *loc.cit*, Vols. I & II.
16) Vide V.N. Drabu, *loc.cit*, p.20.
17) *Ibid*, pp. 64-65.

BURZHOME TO HUTMUR — A SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION & URBANIZATION

3

> Apart from reflecting the majesty and splendour of antiquity, the systematic excavation of the archaeological remains enable us to peep through the corridors of time and space that envelop the civilizations. Burzhome to Hutmur is a solid ground of archaeology that has witnessed the rise and fall of Kashmir culture. It has much to give us, no less judicious than accurate.
>
> —Dr. Ahad

Traversing a long and tedious path of cultural transformation was not an easy task for the early Kashmiris. It took them several milleniums to achieve this and in the process considerable human effort, energy and labour were consumed. Beginning in the shape of pit dwellers in around 3000 B.C., at the karewa tops like Burzhome, the socio-economic life of early Kashmir represented key characteristics of small hunting and gathering bands that lived in pits and subsisted on whatever was available in their surroundings. The remains of these pits and other artifacts, including those of hunting scenes also portraying two suns, and bone tools recovered from Burzhome, a village in the north east of Srinagar at a distance of 24 kms., clearly suggest that:[1]

1. the early hunting men of Kashmir dwelt in pits to protect themselves against the vagaries of nature;
2. they used self-made crude bone tools to kill animals and birds for purposes of food, and also in defence against wild beasts; and
3. they worshipped sun which gave them warmth and regulated their sense of time.

The Burzhome pit remains together with other artifacts recovered from the site help us a lot in understanding the beginning of socio-economic life in Kashmir.[2] In addition to life-style, habitat, cultural patterns and other activities of the early Kashmiris, these provide a valuable and interesting insight into their capacities and skills which they employed in making bone-tools and implements to control the forces of nature and to kill wild animals for purposes of food and fat which they used to protect themselves against cold and as fuel for lighting and heating respectively.[3] Alongside this, these remains point to the formation of religious ethos that developed incessantly in consonance with their surroundings to envelop the mental make-up of the pit dwellers of Kashmir. The geographical isolation of Kashmir, amidst which its early settlements flourished, gave a distinctive shape to the cultural patterns that developed at Burzhome, making them quiet at variance with other known cultural trends of India of the period.[4]

The early socio-economic system of Kashmir passed through various developmental phases to attain maturity and refinement that are embodied in the terracotta tiles of the 3rd century B.C., excavated at Harwan and Hutmur.[5] A wide and varied range of artistic expressions on these tiles are indicative of systematic elaboration and expansion of cultural transformation that manifested itself in the domain of language, politics and religion.

Thus, identifying the presence of substantial variants of cultural formations, these terracotta tiles of Harwan, carrying portraits of female dancers dressed in transparent clothes with soft scarves, performing to the accompaniment of musical instruments, emphasize that:[6]

1. soft and transparent cloth was woven on looms alongwith woolen scarves;
2. musical instruments were also produced;
3. dance , music and painting were the captivating activities and soul-striking sources of entertainment for the elite and sedentary people; and
4. adequate patronage was extended to these stylistic forms by the royalty which in turn amply added to its prestige and dignity by establishing certain norms of etiquette.

These cultural and artistic remains of Harwan, moulded with a variety of refreshing and formidable motifs representing inventiveness and adroitness of indigenous artisans and a fascinatingly colourful and lusty image of life and times, are reliable indicators of a wide and variegated assortment of sedentarization that Kashmir had sedulously achieved during this period.[7] The firm foundations of luxurious urban life are eminently portrayed by the figures of men and women, wearing splendid attire and exquisitely carved earrings and beaded necklaces while seated on embellished balcony engrossed in a love talk over a cup of wine, and those of the horse riders, dancing girls, musicians and water carriers busily engaged in patterning of occupational relationships and improving their skills through a planned division of labour.[8] The time honoured fashion, in which women were parading with a pleasing streak of cosmetics, is seen in the figures of a woman and a dancing girl who are roistering cheerfully, with a distinctive style of hair dress, waving flower vase or incense burner on upraised hand and supporting a skirt with right hand, and with large earrings, loose robes and tight trousers and a long scarf hanging from head and held by hand, respectively.[9]

Similarly, a variety of numerals in geometric progression together with beautifully engraved figures of birds, animals and flowers, especially lotus on the terracotta tiles unearthed in 1987 at Hutmur, district Anantnag (under the supervision of present author, who was Director, Archaeology, Archives & Museums then) in the shape of huge platform erected with great skill, workmanship and a remarkable degree of precision, explicitly show that:[10]

1. science, mathematics and geometry had made great strides;
2. as the main vehicle of gorgeous decoration and splendour of royalty, art and literature were well within the zone of royal patronage; and

3. composite cosmological symbols embodied the religious ethos, rituals and ceremonies from which the royalty drew sustenance and legitimacy for their rule and authority.

Art, science and literature were, thus, inseparably linked with religion; each serving a well defined royal program of institutionalizing broader political authority with complete allegiance of the subjects.

The composition, style and figurative representation of Hutmur tiles reflect the spectacular extension of the glory of Harwan culture that delineates the main contours of the elegance of cultural life of Kashmir. Constituting a pavement in concentric circle with a full-blown lotus in the centre, these tiles of different shapes represent the figures of human beings with normal facial appearances and also with animal heads, besides those of lions, deer, swans, cocks and fruits.[11]

Village Versus City

It will be too naïve to presume that the vast upheavals attendant upon the gradual and systematic spurt in urbanization negatively affected the village communities, or stalled their growth, or pushed these across wilderness to face extinction or temporary disappearance from the scene. These communities, as a matter of fact, continued growing in numbers as the key components of the new change, providing it with the winning streaks of strength and vitality which, eventually, placed it on sound basis to flourish more vibrantly as the very soul of ancient Kashmir with far reaching ramifications. The historical and archaeological evidences available with us amply substantiate that these villages constituted the intrinsic aspects of the new change and constantly remained at the core of all-round progress. Numerous references contained in the historical literature point to the uninterrupted growth of villages called *tapas*, whose number rose to 66,063 at one point of time and to 1,00,000 subsequently.[12] Most of the kings of antiquity are credited with the founding of new villages with arrangements to guard these against the onslaughts of sedentary life style. They imposed relatively reasonable restrictions on the migration of villagers to towns and cities and prohibited them to abandon village household occupations. King Lalitaditya even discouraged them to accumulate wealth. Contemplating that the surplus wealth, ornaments, sophisticated clothes, woolen blankets, horses and houses, as were fit for the cities and towns, would induce them to ignore agriculture, the king initiated novel measures to solicit total absorption of villagers in tilling, cultivation and rearing cattle.[13] Their worldly possessions were not to exceed a few oxen, mud huts, wooden pestles and mortar for husking paddy and a few earthen pots.[14] Under these circumstances the rural urban divide intensified. The increasing ruralization became unavoidable to sustain sedentarization and to fulfill the needs of consumers who had segregated from principal producers.

The pressure of this social whirl and divide also necessitated some degree of decentralization of authority to administer and maintain communications across territories. Governors, administrators and other functionaries were assigned this job; they became a vehicle of the kingship; the most influential people of the kingdom and the main channel between the king and his subjects.[15] They strengthened the hands of the king who in turn assigned villages to them as *agraharas* or benefices.[16] This was an important development which came into existence much before Emperor Asoka extended his suzerainty over Kashmir, and the foremost ruler who patronized the practice of granting villages to influential people was King Lava.[17] The practice became widespread with the passage of time, adding a new dimension to property relations and social interaction that manifested itself in private property titles in land. The royal commands authorized the landholders to enjoy the revenues from the land, making it obligatory on their part to secure the welfare of the donors.[18]

The phenomenon that flourished as a consequence of the Harwan and the Hutmur developments also fostered the emergence of social and professional identity by regulating the life of the people in the manner that enabled them to earn their living through the pursuit of specialized occupations.[19] Favourable conditions, resulting from cultivating artistic and scientific achievements, encouraged them to function in a more open way and, eventually, win for themselves respect in the society and a share in its wealth and sophistication that stimulated their stratification in various social and occupational groups.[20] These processes of identity formation, social stratification and professional specialization generated those conditions that allowed the skills to grow yet further. The contribution of scientists, artists and literatis enriched the intellectual moorings of the society whereas the elite groups nourished the politico-administrative apparatus of the State. Likewise the craftsmen added to the treasure of valuable textiles, jewelry and other luxury items, stimulating taste for the comforts of life.[21]

A variety of these activities ushered in a reasonable pattern of social relations and a set of mental constructs, expressing themselves in the growth of healthy competition, social conflict and slow migration. These trends did not, of course, occur all at once but through gradual and cumulative process, shaking marginally the delicate social equilibrium. Music, jewelry and textiles stimulated taste for the good things in life, inducing villagers to migrate to cities to seek urban comforts and, thereby, create artificial social demographic barriers.[22] The conflict and confrontation between city and peripheral areas became more frequent, besetting the society by incompatible visions of life and conflicting concepts of cosmos. However, these conflicts did not assume the alarming proportions of civil wars, as they did in subsequent centuries, owing to the inherent conflict resolution system available with the society.Common religious beliefs, allegiance to political authority and the customs weighed heavily against discord, marking the growth of collective identity—transcending the urban rural divide—that continues to account for the marked individuality of the Kashmiris and their historical existence amidst their well preserved traditions and extra-ordinary geo-physical setting of their land.

However, with the passage of time social dichotomy and rural urban divide appeared to create noises and play a chord that, though sounding divisive, was potentially important to keep the socio-politico life in motion. The ever-increasing urbanization slowly and gradually excited enormous appetite among the people for a sedentary lifestyle, and occupational identity formation created an environment that sharpened the greed of influential section of society for worldly possessions and fortunes of life. In the ensuing race for accumulation of wealth and its attendant luster and power, the members of royalty, army, soldiery, official and priestly classes were in the forefront, relentlessly striving after riches and conspicuous consumption. Through their machinations, they succeeded in finding out a niche for themselves to live most prosperously to the determinant of the weaker sections of the society and in the process became influential enough to meddle in the affairs of the State to the discomfiture of monarchy.

The pomp and show that accompanied the life style of influential people, particularly members of royal household, and the distinctive atmosphere of grandiose that surrounded their fortified castles and palaces[23]—raised in the heart of cities on the banks of river Jehlum—and the *haute couture* and aristocratic *hauteur* of their women aroused a storm of public indignation which is very aptly displayed in the writings of early writers of Kashmir, especially Kalhana and Ksemendara.

Hitting hardly and indignantly at the vices of officials or *kayasthas* of the State, Kalhana has detailed their corrupt practices and money-grubbing attitude with remarkable frankness and without any fear. He laments the decline in their character and portrays them as people who are deceitful by nature and far superior to a poisoned arrow. He censures them for their viciousness, greed and hypocrisy and warns common people to refrain from their company, as they were more dangerous than disease like cholera rapidly destroying everybody.[24] Likewise, he condemns the unjust means of moneymaking very frequently adopted by the priests or *purohitas* who were held in low estimation for their cheapness, nasty behavior and demon like character. Kalhana exposes the cloak of *auri sacra fames*, which they wore to hide their viciousness and to disguise themselves heavily in order to camouflage their real intentions, with bitter sarcasm.[25] The desire for wealth had gone into their heads so excessively that they did not even hesitate to manipulate religion for gratifying their lust for fortune and for protecting their vested interests. With their crafty maneuverings they organized themselves into corporations or *parsads* at the important places of worship and pilgrimages to shield their interests against any encroachment, and often exploited religious fasts or *prayopavesas* in full public view to their advantage. To these fasts they often resorted as a formidable means of coercing the authorities into considering their unjust demands with favour.[26]

Equally troublesome and mischievous were the military class, *Tantrins*[27] and *Ekengas,*[28] who served as foot-soldiers and royal guards, and the merchants, *Lavanyas,*[29] who left no stone unturned to add to their riches by foul means and by manipulating political situations and by supporting one faction against the other.

Another class of trouble makers was constituted by *Damaras*[30] whose pillaging activities perpetuated the social conflict and widened the borders of cultural divide, thrusting people into a social whirl characterized by the feelings of disenchantment and divisiveness. To increase their wealth and power and to grace their palaces with comfort and plenty, they continued with their looting and plundering ventures, bringing untold miseries to the people.

Kalhana says that a *Damara*, namely Jayyaka had accumulated exceptional wealth that was so great that King Kalasa could easily relieve himself of all his money-troubles after confiscating it at the demise of the former.[31]

Thus, the gradual spread of these splinter social groups, as powerful and wealthy sections of society for the purpose of pandering to their pleasures in their fortified and majestic mansions wherefrom they scoured the Valley for plunder, plagued the country afflicting the people with malice for each other. The resultant menace of antagonism, bickering and disenchantment affected the economy so badly that the chances of employment were considerably reduced for the weaker sections of society, leaving them with no choice but either to die of starvation or resort to begging or robbery. Most of the people who took to begging did not hesitate to threaten to remove their testicles in full public view if they were refused alms; and those who failed to evoke any response to their mendicancy became robbers, assassins and prostitutes.[32]

A realistic picture of this melancholy is depicted in one of the figure stamped tiles of Harwan which shows men with emaciated, lean and nude bodies with their bent backs, legs tucked up, hands placed on knees, and chins resting on their hands.

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) Burzhome (lat. 34⁰ 10´´ N, long. 74⁰ 54´ E) is situated at a distance of 24Kms. north-east of Srinagar at the back of Telbal village. Capped by Megaliths, the site lies in the characteristically flat karewa terrain of the Valley and is about 0.05 Sq.Kms. in the aerial extent representing an eroded remnant of a river terrace of Dagwan Nallah that drains the slopes of Dachigam wild life sanctuary. See S.L. Shali, *Kashmir: History and Archaeology*, pp. 61-67.
2) Investigations have revealed that a highly developed neolithic culture flourished there. Since the site has been partially excavated (1935) so far, it is believed that further excavations would provide us clues regarding the socio-economic conditions obtaining there during the period under review. For details see De Terra & Paterson, *Studies on the Ice Age in India and Associated Human Cultures*, p.233; S.L. Shali, *op.cit*, pp. 61, 64;
3) A variety of bone and stone tools comprising bows, arrows and spears depicted in the art on a stone slab clearly indicate the capacity and the technical know-how of the pit dwellers in sustaining their life in a balanced manner. These were used for hunting purposes and for mobilizing natural resources. S.L. Shali, *ibid*, pp. 69-70.
4) The uniqueness of the cultural patterns is visible in the types of bone implements and the Megaliths which are reported to be the first. Even the burial practices prevalent among the pit dwellers do not bear any resemblance to those of the contemporary Harpan culture. It is most probable that magico-religious practices were common among the pit-dwellers. *Ibid*, pp.61, 73.
5) For details see Dr. Abdul Ahad, *op.cit*, pp. 9, 22.
6) The manufacturing of terracotta tiles has gone through an elaborate process of evolution before it reached the sophistication found in Harwan tiles. 'The potter who made the tiles and stamped them with decorative figures numbered them before baking to prevent the comparatively unskilled lyre from making mistakes and, thereby, spoiling the design'. It also shows that the labourers of the period were expected to know the rudiments of writing and reading. R.C. Kak, *op.cit*, p.104. Also see S.L. Shali, *op.cit*, pp.129-135; Benjamin Rowland, *The Art & Architecture of India*, p.110.
7) See Dr. Abdul Ahad, *op.cit*, Appendices "H" & "I"
8) *Ibid*, pp. 9, 45, 48, 49, 56, 62, 70.
9) See *ibid*, Plates.

10) Dr. Abdul Ahad, *An Important Archaeological Discovery*, press note, dated 14-02-1988, issued by the Directorate of Archaeology, Srinagar.

11) These tiles are carved, bearing figurative decoration. The pavement is laid out in concentric circle with a full blown lotus in the centre. The motifs and figures on these tiles are representative of the fauna and flora of the site.

12) Dr. Abdul Ahad, *op.cit*, "Appendix", H and note 2.

13) *Ibid*, and notes.

14) *Ibid*, and notes.

15) *Ibid.*

16) Kalhana's *Rajtarangini*, (Stein), b,i, 87-88, 90, 96, 98, 100, 121, 175, 307, 311, 314; b, iii, 376, 481; b, iv, 9, 639; b, v, 23, 24, 170 n; 397, 402, 442; b, vi; 89, 336; b, vii, 182, 84, 185; b, viii, 2408, 2419, 3355.

17) *Ibid.*

18) *Ibid.*

19) Dr. Abdul Ahad, *op.cit*, p.122; Appendix, "I"

20) *Ibid.*

21) The Kashmiri craftsmen were even trained in manufacturing glass jars in which the holy waters of Papasudana *tirtha* were exported to Malwa. A large number of such glass jar fragments were until recently found scattered on the road leading to the Papasudana Kapatesvara spring from the village Kuthiar. *Ibid*, p. 123; Kalhana's *Rajtarangini*, Stein), b, vii, 190-93; R.C.Kak, *op.cit*, p. 139.

22) Dr. Abdul Ahad, *op.cit*, pp.141-143.

23) See Kalhana's *Rajtarangini*, *op.cit*. "There are mansions which reach to the sky and ascending which one sees the earth, glistening in the rain at the close of summer and covered with flowers in [the month of] Chaitra". *Ibid*, b, iii, 359.

24) Kalhana's *Rajtarangini*, (Stein), b viii, 88-91. For *kayasthas* see, b, iv, 90, 621, 629; b, vii, 1226; Vol I, p. 19.

25) Kalhana exposes the machinations of the 'Brahman priests or *purohitas* organized into corporations (*parsad*) who played an important part in the politics of the country. The solemn fasts to which they were apt to resort in critical circumstances were evidently powerful means of coercion which weak rulers had reason to dread'. *Ibid*, Vol.I, pp. 19, 37. For details see *ibid*, b, ii, note 132.

26) For solemn fast or *prayopavesa* see *ibid*, b, iv, 82, 99; b,v, 468; b,vi, 25, 336, 343; b,vii, 13, 1088, 1157, 1611; b,viii, 51, 110, 658, 709, 768, 808, 939, 2224, 2733, 2739: Vol. I, p.37.

27) For *Tantrins* see *ibid*, b,v, 248 n, 249-250; 260, 265, 274, 287-289, 293-295, 302, 328, 331, 338-340, 421, 431; b,vi, 132; b, vii, 1513;

b,viii, 292, 597, 928.

28) For *Ekengas* see b,v, 249-250, 259, 261, 288; b,vi, 91, 120, 124, 132-133; b, vii, 94, 135, 155, 161, 162, 1604.

29) For *Lavanyas* see b, vii, 1171; 1229-1233, 1237-1238; b, viii, 747, 776, 910, 956, 1010, 1032, 1268, 1541, 2538, 3447.

30) The *Damaras*, a fierce intractable tribe of semi-independent feudal lords, constituted the most powerful element in the country who played the role of king makers. Kalhana describes them as land-grabbing oligarchy which in his own time was threatening to destroy all remnant of royal power. Even a powerful King, Lalitaditya was so scared of them that he did not allow people to accumulate wealth lest they might become powerful *Damaras*. "If they should", said the king, "keep more wealth, they would become in a single year very formidable *Damaras*, and strong enough to neglect the commands of the king". For more details see *ibid*, Vol.II, pp. 304-308.

31) *Ibid*, b, vii, 494-499.

32) This practice was common till the end of the Dogra regime. M.A. Stein himself witnessed it and wrote: "certain mendicants established in Srinagar, but recruited from the Punjab and known as *Sutrasahi*, still practice exactions by threatening to remove their testicles, in case they are refused alms". *Ibid*, b, viii, 142 n; verse.

THE RINGING OF TEMPLE BELLS

4

> .... When the present period of the [seventh] Manu *Vaivasvata* had arrived, the *Prajapati Kasyapa* caused the gods led by Druhina, Upendra and Rudra to descend, caused [the demon]*Jalodbhava*, who dwelt in that [lake], to be killed, and created the land known by the name of *Kasmir* in the space [previously occupied by] the lake. That [land] is protected by Nila, the lord of all Nagas, whose regal parasol is formed by the circular pond [of the Nilakunda] with the *Vitasta* newly rising stream as its stick[1]
>
> —Kalhana

The sprouting of the Kashmir society, in the thick of complicated and inhospitable geographical and climatic conditions with limited communication facilities, was increasingly marked with the tendency of facilitating the acceleration of ethnic, familial and parochial considerations which began to count for the behavioural patterns and social attitudes of the Kashmiris right from the time of usurpation of their land by the *Pissacas*[2], who had created havoc by oppressing and executing the *Nagas*.[3] Under their chief, Jalodbhava, these marauding bands of the *Pissacas* perpetrated untold sufferings on the people and fomented discord by unleashing a storm of racial discrimination and social abuse against the *Nagas*. The staggering contempt and lofty disdain which they exhibited frequently towards the people aroused the wrath of Nila, the *Naga* chief, who decided to wreak vengeance for their criminalities. Accomplished, as he was, with an unusual combination of intelligence and determination, Nila launched a major offensive against the dreadful *Pissacas*. He took them by surprise and drove them out to make the Valley a safe abode for the *Nagas*, an innocent lot of the early Kashmiris.[4]

This ethnic cleansing of the *Pissacas* was facilitated by:

1. their domineering attitude, brashness, insolence and racial prejudice against the *Nagas*;
2. their policy of frequent religious persecution of this feeble lot;
3. Nila's longing for liberating Kashmir from his opponents;
4. his predilection for establishing a full-fledged kingdom for himself; and
5. his driving political ambition for becoming an undisputed monarch of this kingdom.

The ethnic anarchy that surrounded Kashmir during this period is vividly portrayed in *Nilamat Purana*[5] which also reflects King Nila's commitment to his self, his community and his religion and to the rationale and vision behind his politico - religious thought and outlook that he made good use of in overcoming his tensions and obstacles. It also refers to his institution of patriarchal joint family that he established to strengthen the political and religious structure of his kingdom and to tickle his own ethnic vanity.[6] Accommodating several hundred persons: grandfather, father, uncles, nephews, sons, daughters-in-law etc; under one roof, the joint family was created to give wide powers to its patriarch, Nila who in return promised to ensure the protection of its members and to safeguard their honour and dignity against any infringement. With the expansion of joint family into a federation of several natural families, Nila appointed the senior members of the senior most families as heads of the villages they settled in, and entrusted them with the functions of administering civil and criminal justice, and collecting taxes and other dues with the obligation to come to the assistance of their patriarch when required to do so.[7] For incoming settlers, he issued a separate code to follow.[8] Some literary texts, notably *Kuttanimata*, indicate that even women were made chieftains of petty villages and given patronage to control these with the effective help of officials and army, of course they were kith and kin of the patriarch.[9] Kalhana also sheds some light on kinsmen who accompanied kings alongside the ministers. King Avantivarman is depicted sharing his power with his kinsmen who are believed to have been set up as petty chieftains of various territorial units into which the kingdom was divided for administrative convenience.[10]

Evidently a number of families descending from a common ancestor, thus, constituted a village and several such villages made a tribe and a territorial unit which accommodated incoming settlers as well. The State or kingdom founded by Nila was, thus, a conglomerate of these villages and tribes. Its socio-religio-politico structure was based on the theory of *dharma* and *karma*; the most significant aspects of Hinduism.[11] The *Nilmat Purana* and other literary sources have commended the combination and blending of temporal with religious functions by the State. The king is shown holding the priestly office as well, giving sermons and imploring his subjects to abide by his instructions—a mixture of religious and political ideas—duly sanctified by the Hindu religion.[12] These instructions made people believe that any violation of these would invite horrible punishments from the Hindu gods, in whose honour the rulers raised *viharas*, temples and shrines to invoke their blessings.[13] The righteousness was suggested for both the ruler and the ruled as being the vital source of their security and stability and any deviation from the path of *Indra*, *Varuna*, *Kubera* etc; would attract their wrath and aversion.

It was more viable for the kings to ensure peace and prosperity to their kingdoms through the medium of religion than that of the political manipulations and, of course, it proved an effective device to secure the obedience and allegiance of the people to the commands of the State and respect for its authority and dignity. This religious orientation of the State affairs preserved the stability of society which had assumed a heterogeneous character owing to the settlement of outsiders in Kashmir.

These outsiders were to abide by the rules and regulations envisaged in the code devised by the King Nila especially for them.[14] There were, thus, two sets of codes of instructions, one for the *Nagas* and other for the incoming settlers, that augmented heterogeneity of the society; creating a pattern of relationships that stimulated delicate nuances of social distinction and diversity as signified by *varanas* or caste system. In this system the Brahmans formed an exclusive social class with the privilege of being the centre of royal attention and patronage. Owing to their preoccupation with the spiritual and intellectual development of the society, they would often pulsate with pride, prejudice and contempt for other *varanas*, and despised the village-menials, the *(Dombas)* and the scavengers *(Candalas)*, the humblest of all, to the hilt; making their life socially miserable.[15] Regarding themselves as a repository of knowledge and custodian of religion and embodiment of values, they utilised their intuitive faculties in weaving a web of communal mores around the society that, eventually, gained credence, stifling the development of other communities and, thereby, paving the way for tensions and bickerings.[16]

With the forward movement of the State and society in the subsequent centuries, the caste distinction, communal ego and occupational differentiation flourished much to the discomfort of the people, making the Valley a stronghold of social stratification to sustain the ideological onslaught of Buddhism. A religion based on rational thinking and modest living, Buddhism was introduced in Kashmir by the Emperor Asoka soon after he turned an enthusiastic Buddhist zealot at the conclusion of the corpse-strewen Kalinga war in 261 B.C.[17] The new religion could not, however, gain a firm foothold in the Valley in front of its already developed culture. Even its transformation into *Mahayana* cult by Kanishka did not win it new followers in Kashmir wherefrom it swiftly moved to Central Asia, Tibet, China, Korea and Japan. But interestingly enough the new faith exercised a profound influence on the art, and architecture of Kashmir by establishing stupas and monasteries that abounded the Valley as revealed by Kalhana.[18]

Though a powerful attraction for caste burdened Kashmiris, the inherent simplicity and humanistic approach of Buddhism was always overshadowed by excessive proselytizing fervour of Buddhist monks. Instead of bringing any improvement in the pattern of social relations, these monks with their characteristic behaviour and corrupt practices and over enthusiasm greatly antagonized public opinion and, thus, promoted hostilities and tensions which allowed the social cleavage, rooted in the *varana* system, to deepen further.[19]

The prevalence of varying cults and faiths, antagonistic to each other, and religio-social unrest—an offshoot of machinations of *kayasthas*, overbearing and unflagging attitude of marauding bands of *Damaras*, *Ekengas*, *Tantrins*, *Lavanyas*, intrigues of Brahmans and cunning stratagems of *purohitas*, and above all the gradual ostracization of humble castes—did not augur well for the ancient Kashmir. These were too enticing to resist by the expansionists who had already eaten away huge chunks of Indian territory and were now preparing to extend their sphere of influence to Kashmir. The prospects were quite bright for the Indo-Bactrian Greeks to embark on a new venture of conquering Kashmir. They finally conquered Kashmir to rule its up hills and down dales for a period whose beginning and end are not mentioned in the literary sources. But interestingly their coins found at Semthan, Bijbehara and Maidan Chegul, Handwara, do speak eloquently about their positive performance as rulers and their powerful dispensation which they gave to the Kashmiris to compete in commercial competition with Gandhara, Taxila and Ujjain.[20] They could not, however, hold their sway over Kashmir and had to retreat, eventually, in the face of rising power of the Maurayas and the Kushans who successively extended their suzerainty and faith to the Valley which also did not prove lasting too long due to variable pressures. The political firmament of these powers was exclusively based on a new religion immensely stuffed with fascinating principles of simplicity, non-violence, tolerance and demilitarization and with a plenty of scope for releasing people from the clutches of oppressive Brahman priesthood. But the religious zealotry of leading Buddhist exponents and monks and their unrelenting endeavours to make this faith a State religion, and its essential contradictions that ultimately split it into *Hinyana* and *Mahayana* cults, dragged it out to barren wilderness, quickly narrowing down its prospect for buying new servants.

Bloody Intrusion

With its already developed culture and deeply entrenched Brahmanistic pantheon, Kashmir did not allow Buddhism to spread its sphere of activities beyond influencing its art, architecture and literature, and a little murmur that it created in the beginning soon faded away in the face of public opposition. The novelty of its lofty ideals of declassing and depolicing the society, which had already weakened the authority and dignity of the Maurayan and the Kushan monarchies, soon wore off under the weight of its own brand of egalitarianism. The platoon of *Bikshu* bigots, a religious brigade attired in the clerical garb of celibacy but sunken deeper into utter degradation, had done more harm than good. They were awash with the uncanny tales of immorality that kept sticking out to drag the cause of the new faith into murky confusions which prompted Mihirakula, a Hun refugee (who had been driven out of his country after his defeat to take shelter in the Valley) to meddle in messy State affairs.[21]

Though not sound intellectually, Mihirakula used his demeanour expediently in the prevailing Kashmir situation and succeeded in turning the tide to his favour by exploiting anti-Buddhist sentiments of the people. With assuming the reins of Government, he let loose a reign of terror, striking dread among his adversaries by raising a cloud of dust through mass destruction of Buddhist structures. A symbol of unprecedented terror and boundless perversion, this white Hun had earned notoriety as a reckless killer and ferocious sadist who brought about bloody massacre of innocent people simply for his own delight. He did not even spare animals especially elephants whom he threw down the dangerous precipice on the Pir Panjal pass, *Hastivanj* (the destroyer of elephants), just to drive sadistic pleasure out of the horrible and exacerbating shrieks they produced while falling into the deep ravine. Likewise, on a sneaking whim that there was no chaste woman worthy of even dreaming his betrothal, he uprooted all the numerous families whose women folk came under the needle of his suspicion. The scenes managed to extract the foetus of pregnant women for his cheerfulness and enjoyment least disturbed his conscience; he had no conscience at all.[23] He was so enormously filled with rage at the sight of breasts of his queen, marked with gold foot prints under the cloth manufactured in Srilanka, that he invaded that country in no time with his full might.[24] Such were the immutable idiosyncrasies of this ancient King of white Hun lineage who not only manipulated his way to the throne but also turned Kashmir *Shaivite* to restore the loud ringing of its temple bells with their pristine pomp and noise.[25]

The circumstances that followed the ascendancy of Mihirakula propelled Hinduism along the dales and vales of Kashmir at an amazing speed, spreading its fragrance over a period of seven centuries, inspiring Kashmiris to sing *Shaivite* chants to the tune of ringing bells uninterruptedly till it assimilated into mainstream

Islamic culture due to its inherent contradiction between its pretensions and actualities.

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, *op.cit*, b. i, 26-28.
2) For *Pissacas* see Kalhana, *op.cit*, b.i, 184n; b.iv, 710n.
3) For *Nagas* see *ibid*, b,i, 29-30; b,iii, 179, 185, 259, b,iii, 21, 25, b,iv, 601; b,vii, 169, 171.
4) *Ibid*; b, i, 26-29.
5) The *Nilamat* (or teachings of Nila) contains legends which shed light on the origin of Kashmir and on the first settlement of the *Nagas* under their patriarchal chief, Nila on the land that had been reclaimed from the great lake of *Sati*sar. Owing to the mass killing of the inhabitants by Jalodbhava, a water-born demon, Nila approached his father Kashyapa to help him in getting rid of the wicked demon who was ultimately killed. Then followed the settlement of human beings who acknowledged Nila as their king. As the country was occupied in winter by the *Pissacas* under their King, Nikumbha, men lived only for six months at the beginning of spring. Most of the *Pissacas* were killed in the tribal conflict. The land was permanently settled by the followers of Kashyapa. This refers to the genesis of a territory, society or a State, organised under the patriarchal chief, who became its first king. For *Nilamat Purana* see Buhler's, *Report*, pp. 37-38.
6) V.N. Drabu, *Kashmir Polity*, p.14.
7) *Ibid*.
8) *Ibid*, p.37.
9) *Ibid*, pp.50-51.
10) Kalhana, *op.cit*, b, v, 18-25.
11) V.N. Drabu, *op.cit*, pp.22-30.
12) There was no concept of any Church-and State dichotomy. *Ibid*, p.23.
13) Kalhana, *op.cit*, b,i, 93-94, 98, 103, 140-144, b,iii, 9, 11, 13, 14, 355, 380; b,iv, 79, 184, 188, 200, 210, 215-216; b,vi, 171, 175, 303; b,vii,. 696, 1336, b,viii, 246, 248, 2402, 2410, 2417, 2431, 2433.
14) V.N. Drabu, *op.cit*, p.37.
15) For humblers castes see Kalhana, *op.cit*, b, iv, 475n; b, vi, 77-79, 192; b, vii, 309; 251.
16) Kalhana does not conceal his contempt of the Brahmans, though he himself belonged to the same class. *Rajatarangini* exposes their ignorance as well as arrogance.
17) *Ibid*, Vol.I, 8, 9, 76, 2; Vol.II, 355; b, i, 101n; 168n; 289n; 131n; 172n;
18) For details see Jean Naudou, *Buddhists of Kashmir*; 1980,Delhi.

19) For Buddhist monks in Kashmir see Kalhana, *op.cit*, b,i, 184, 186; b,iii, 9; 12.
20) See Dr.Abdul Ahad, *op.cit*, pp. 121, 128.
21) For detailed references regarding the data bearing on the King Mihirakula see Kalhana, *op.cit*, Vol.I, pp.78-79; b, i, 289 and note; 290-294, 302, 309.
22) *Ibid*, b, i, 302-303 and notes.
23) See Dr. Abdul Ahad, *Kashmiri Women, Accord*, Vol.I, 1976.
24) *Ibid;* Kalhana; *op.cit*, b, i, 294. The king is said to have slaughtered three "crores" of women of respectable birth together with their husbands, brothers and sons. Kalhana, *ibid*, b, i, 321-322.
25) Also see S.L. Shali, *op.cit*, p.144.

OF SATANIC VOICES

5

To achieve liberation (*mukti*) and enjoyment (*bhukti*) and the orgiastic rites involving the use of five *makaras* i,e *matsya* (fish), *mamasa* (meat), *madya* (wine), *maithuna* (sex) and *mudra* (physical gestures), numerous rituals developed in northern India, Kashmir and Nepal into the monstrous and polydemonic doctrine that promoted the worship of *Shakti* in the person of a naked women—the carnal copulation of the initiated, each couple representing *Bhairava* and *Bhairvi*.

—Waddel[1] —Barth[2]

These 'misguiding' practices offered only wine and women in the name of religion—these are at once "the most revolting and horrible that human depravity could think of".

—Chatterjee[3]

Even the *Puranas* proclaimed that the *Tantras* only confounded the wicked: *dustanam mohanarthaya* [4].

—Kumarila

Till recently these practices were prevalent in Kashmir among the Brahmans who would communicate the ritualistic presentation of a *Tantric* tract to their children at bed time [5].

—V.N.Drabu

Though extremely difficult, entry to Paradise (Kashmir) was not restricted. Its charming scenic beauty, lush green valleys, raging mountain torrents, gurgling water falls, flowing rivers, pearly hillocks; its birds chirping merrily in apple and willow trees, and murmur of its bees in delightful orchard gardens so enchanted people of different hues, and even 'gods', that they refused to leave. With the reclamation of its land from water, Kashmir, thus, set out chiselling its mores under the deepening influence of a variety of people whose angelic smiles and satanic voices wafted across gushing lakes and murmuring rivulets to shape the course of its history.

It is most likely that among the early settlers a branch of the Indo-Aryans might have settled down in Kashmir, alongside the indigenous *Nagas* and remaining *Pissacas*, with a solemn pledge to abide by Nila's code designed for aliens who intended to flourish under his tutelage.[6] The acknowledgement of *Sati* (lake) as a queen consort of the Kashmiri preferred *Shiva*, by the incoming settlers was, obviously, a logical outcome of this agreement.[7] Their adoption of the native rituals, customs and beliefs, therefore, denoted their complete assimilation into the soul and blood of the Valley and also signified the moulding of their spirituality in *Shaivism*, the religion of the land.[8]

Based on the belief that the creation of the universe was the result of consummation of a relationship between *Shiva* and *Sati* (also *Shakti)*, the foundations of this religion were fiercely shaken when one of the partners (*Sati*) of this union was abducted by non other than Jalodbhava, the water born demon who had cast his unbridled lustful eyes on the voluptuous queen.[9] By rendering *Shiva* alienated from his beloved, which also pointed towards an impending doom of the universe and the consequent extinction of the faith, this episode assumed a great importance which the loyal and ardent *Shaivites* could not ignore. The release of the queen from her captivity, thus, became a vital national issue; prompting Nila, the leader of the *Nagas*, for immediate and effective action against the demon.[10] With the support of 'gods', Nila *Naga* succeeded in breaking down the demon's power by dragging him out of the womb of water where he had firmly entrenched himself to foil all attempts of queen's escape.

With the freedom of *Sati* from the clutches of her devil adorer; with the suppression of the forces inimical to peace; with the eviction of barefaced decoy; and with the opening up of vistas of Kashmir's beauty for the enjoyment of both natives and outsiders began the process of strengthening the edifice of *Shaivism* with renewed enthusiasm. Up in spirits, the people pressed themselves into the service of the faith, enriching it to make a room for all little 'gods' and goddesses' to live in and breed.[11] With their liberality, they developed it further in approximation to the growing needs of a political organization that was committed to its assurance of non-interference in their affairs till their fidelity continued forthcoming to the crown. The conditional generosity of the monarchy encouraged the intermediaries of the faith to thrive prosperously in the kingdom. With their unhindered access to all that was available there, they were able to acquire all material comforts, pleasures and security for themselves. Thus, began their *affaire de couer* in the lap of the Paradise which they guarded so jealously as not to succumb to any pressure during their ascendancy in the social organization of the land.[12]

For the perpetual enjoyment of pleasures of life the deities revived the old rituals, in vogue during the hunting and gathering stage of the Kashmiri culture,[13] which created conditions that favoured the formation of *Tantrism*; a system which recognizes *Shiva-Shakti*, the supreme Deity and enjoys equal patronage of Hinduism and Buddhism; and which continued to play a very important role in the socio-economic system of ancient Kashmir.[14]

These *Tantric* practices were not alien to Kashmir; they were rooted in its remote antiquity characterised by the hunting and gathering stage of its cultural formation. Burzhome of the third—second millennium B.C., has yielded up this secret to the archaeologists who came across a diagram on a stone slab which depicts sexual scene in an obscene way. It shows a standing stripped stag with its genitals exaggerated and male and female hunters piercing the animal from the front and the back. The male hunter's genitals are also shown erected whereas the breasts of the female are swelling which indicate her desire for sexual intercourse with the male partner whose right knee is bent on the ground and genitals exposed to view. The hunting game with its long legs and erect organ expresses a similar desire. The whole scene suggests an eagerness to prove their virility and the female hunter's longing to mate her male once the game is finished and they have partaken of the flesh of the stag whose virility is a stimulant to their copulation.

Suggesting the presence of phallic worship as a dominating cult of the early settlers of Burzhome, this ritual was subsequently owned and developed by the deities for ensuring a permanent and constant satisfaction of their pleasures and demands of their life-style. In the new socio-economic climate, based on agriculture, they reshaped the phallic emblems into the symbolic representation of *Shiva-Shakti* and the installation of *lingam* in a *yantra.*[15] The meat with wine in the company of naked women continued to flourish as their favourite dish and pleasure, and the expansion of female and male genitals as vital means of their communication with the supreme.[16] Throughout the ancient history of Kashmir the inseparable *Shiva-Shakti* rituals gained tremendous footing and momentum in its socio-economic system and, eventually, developed into *Tantric* ideology which was spontaneously patronized by the Brahmans to promote their own interests.[17] To them it sounded increasingly promising to exploit it to ensure a regular supply of labour power for the extraction of social surplus in the agricultural economy in which women constituted a potential and dependable source of labour.[18] The most privileged and the ruling elite too found it most viable and effective to achieve their carnal desires and to perpetuate un-equal distribution of surplus that strengthened their material, ideological, juridical and royal moorings.[19] Though unintelligible, due to their abstruse terms, these rituals of the union of *Rudrayamala* and *Rudran*, or *Yogan* and *Yogni*, or *Bhairava* and *Bhairavi* (gods and goddesses) were to the gullible the manifestation of the supreme; vital source of attaining elysium; the prime motivation for reconciling with their disparities and disabilities.[20]

The *lingam yantra* rituals and *Tantric* concepts developed further under the sunny disposition of the egalitarian Buddhism; enjoying full public support and royal patronage to become a common sight of obscene gestures, drunken revelries and salacious gossips amidst dense forests and at the untamed foothills where icons, hermits and *Bikshus* cropped up with their sensuousness to experience the delight of sexual union. Ksemendra gives an interesting and hilariously funny account of the situation through his conversation with a *Bikshu*:[21]

> Q. *Bikshu*, why is your body so emaciated?
> A. On account of catching fish.
> Q. Do you eat fish?
> A. Yes, it is part and parcel of wine.
> Q. Do you drink wine?
> A. Yes, in the company of women.
> Q. Do you mix with women?
> A. Yes, after I strangle my enemies.
> Q. Have you enemies?
> A. Yes, because I burgle.
> Q. Are you a thief?
> A. Yes, because I gamble.
> Q. Are you a gambler?
> A. Yes, I am a *Bikshu.*

Kalhana too writes about these so called spiritually high and mighty *Bikshus* who in utter disregard to the Buddhist canons brought "intolerable plague"[22] by their indulgence in pleasure-seeking and property-owning. Kashmir had, thus, married *Bikshus* who also owned property. In the *viharas* separate arrangements were made for the *Bikshus* who possessed wives, children and cattle: Kalhana writes:[23]

> In one half of [the *vihara* were] placed those *Bikshus* whose conduct conformed

> to the precepts, and in the other those who being in possession of wives, children, cattle and property, deserved blame for their life as householders.

The art motifs on terracotta pieces of Harwan also reveal *yogic* postures, clearly depicting the sexual intercourse of couples and their final delight that ensures at orgasm. Another figurative motif shows a male naked on a pedestal with his left hand placed on the waist and right one raised up holding something.

Similarly the legends and motifs on the coins of eighth-ninth century A.D., denote the growth of *Tantric* rituals in Kashmir during this period.

In the ancient Kashmiri pantheon the *Tantric* rituals, thus, assumed prominent position as a chief source of multiplying the wealth of the kingdom and accelerating urbanization and giving a fresh impetus to agriculture and trade. But it was opulently marked by melancholy and fear of spreading numerous ailments, conspicuous being syphilis.[24] The religious scriptures and commentaries on these rituals clearly point to wide spread disease of syphilis and refer to a kind of delicious fruit which was medicinally used to cure it.[25] Writing about the life of debauchery, Kalhana says:[26]

> The enjoyment of the wives of others, in which the exceptional pleasure is due to a dependence on others, is for those who are filled with passion [just like] *ghee* poured into the flaming fire of desire.

Besides, incestuous relationships developed to paralyse the society, sparing not even kings and queens.[27] About King Harsa, Kalhana writes:[28]

> His father's wives, who had brought him up on their arms, he took in his arms, kissed them, and continually disported himself with them. He had carnal intercourse with his sisters, and angered by a harsh word he punished and violated *Naga*, the daughter of his father's sister.

Thus, Kashmir was a sinkhole of moral depravity; a gigantic brothel, steeped in animal lust with syphilis as its offshoot. The *Tantric* creed also attached much importance to magic which was believed to bring the forces of nature under the control of the community to enable the people to protect their crops against calamities.[29] The magico-*Tantric* rites of sexual-union were, therefore, supposed to be intrinsically linked with fertility;[30] but they were also used to befool people by leading them into the belief, through tricks, that the 'gods' and 'goddesses' descended from the heaven. Marco Polo states:[31]

> Chesimur is a province which still has idolaters with languages for themselves. It conceives so much enchantment from devils that it is marvellous; for it makes idols talk. They can change the weather by enchantment, and can make it become dark; and so many great things are done that it is necessary to see to believe. And they tell you they are chieftains and they have descended from the idols.

Ksemendra shows these magicians going from house to house; giving performance of their perverse conduct; distributing some recipes of seduction to the street walkers and, thereby, making themselves highly venerated.[32]

Another significant aspect of the *Yogic* rituals was that the disciple was required to surrender everything, including his wife, son, daughter and house, to the religious institution, and the teacher who taught these practices.[33] Gift giving became an unavoidable feature of the society owing to its keeping goods and people in circulation and maintaining political relationship and social status.[34] A large portion of landed property came to be assigned to temples and shrines by free gift which assured adequate material comforts and pleasures to 'gods' and 'goddesses', deities and their intermediaries, the *purohitas*.[35]

The *Tantra* system, though formidable enough to have carved out an important position for itself in the society, met stiff opposition from certain quarters which, with their interpretation of the *Puranas*, proclaimed it as the religion of the wicked. Kumarila (C. sixth century) declared that the *Tantra* was meant for the degenerate, the uneducated, the fallen or the infirm.[36] The critics regarded it a degraded form of religion which preached excessive indulgence to the use of animal food and wine and the worship of *Shakti* in the person of a naked woman. Benoytosh Bhattacharya writes:[37]

> If at any time in the history of India the mind of the nation as a whole has been diseased, it was in the Tantric age or the period immediately preceding the Mohammaden conquest of India.

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) L.A.Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet*, p.15.
2) A. Barth, *The Religions of India*, p.205.
3) Quoted in V.N. Drabu's, *Saivagamas*, p.20.
4) *Ibid*, p.30 n.53.
5) *Ibid*, p.30 n.52.
6) See foregoing notes, & text.
7) See foregoing notes & text.
8) That the *Shaivism* was predominant in Kashmir is borne by the fact that each book of Kalhana's *Rajtarangini* is prefixed with verse containing prayers addressed to *Shiva* in his form of *Ardhanarisvara*, representing the god in his union with *Parvati*. As a matter of fact, *Shiva* worship occupied the first place among the Hindu cults of the Valley. *Rajatarangini*, *op.cit*; Vol.I p.8.
9) See foregoing notes.
10) *Ibid*.
11) *Bhairava* cult was one of the most powerful cults in Kashmir. The fusion of the *Nagas* and the Brahmans was achieved by recognizing *Shakti* as the motive power in the transformation of human consciousness, and the awakening of bio-psychic energy. On seeing the Kashmiris more and more inclined towards *Shakti*, Hiuen Tsang said: 'at the present time this kingdom is not much given to the faith and the temples of the heretics are their sole thought'. *Si Yu-Ki* (Beal), Vol.I, p.158.
12) The icons at Harwan reveal that a large number of *sidqhas*, *viras* and *virayognis*, living at the foothills indulged in mystic practices of *yoga*. The art motifs clearly hint at the *Tantric* rituals and *yogic* postures, and show the sexual intercourse of couples. They show how at the time of sexual intercourse with women absorption is brought into her and the final delight that ensures at orgasm betokens the delight of the Brahman. Spicemen's of the Harwan tiles are available with S.P.S Museum, Srinagar. Some antiquities unearthed at Semthan, district Anantnag (1977-83) also substantiate our contention. A well proportioned miniature figure shows a male standing naked on a pedestal, his left hand placed on the waist and the right one raised up holding something. This indicates the prevalence of *Tantrism*.
13) The pleasure-seeking practices owe their origin to the Neolithic-Magalithic culture of Burzhome. The hunting scene on a stone slab recovered from the site substantiates this.

14) In the S.P.S. Museum, there is a sculpture (originally found at Andorkoth) of the seventh century A.D. It is the *yoni* of a rectangular shape with a *Tantra* inscribed on the inner rectangle on which was seated the *Shivalinga.* This mode of worshipping typifies the union of the male and female principles (*lingam* in *arghya)*; the popular form of worship in the Valley during the period under-review.

15) That the male emblem was worshiped together with the *yoni* is amply substantiated by archaeology. It was fully developed by the 7th century A.D. A chiselled rectangular-stone, recovered from Wontabhavan, Srinagar, with *yantra* incised in the middle represents the male organ (now missing) with an *arghya* below it, testifies close association of the *linga* with *yoni* in the 7th century Kashmir.

16) A. Brath, *op.cit*; p.205.

17) These practices played an important role in the socio-economic system of ancient Kashmir. Their necessity was recognized for promoting the fertility of soil, and agricultural fruitfulness. Thus, *Shiva-Shakti* worship became more popular in the wake of the growth of agriculture and the origin of the village communities. For more details on the subject see E.O. James; *Ancient Gods*; *The Cult of Mother Goddess*; Motichandra, *Studies in the Cult of Mother Goddess in Ancient India*, pp.1-3.

18) The Brahmans generated the necessary social and ideological climate for extracting social surplus. They led the people into the belief that they alone knew what was proper for them and, thus, monopolized the rituals to represent the gods on the occasion of the performance of these rituals. This monopolization of religion was necessitated by the growing feudalization of society and the extension of agricultural economy in which women provided an adequate labour force. V.N. Drabu, *Saivagamas*, pp.185, 267.

19) The *Tantric* practices were excessively exploited to ensure a regular supply of labour potential and to achieve the goal of 'a joyful life'. Both archaeological and literary sources testify to this. The human participants of the rite of sexual intercourse identified themselves with *Shiva* and *Shakti* respectively.

20) The main purpose of *Tantric* rituals and *Shiva-Shakti* worship was to silence dissent and any possible expression to voices of social protest. These were aimed at the regimentation of new relations of production following the large scale transfer of peasant-holdings and ritual-crafts workers to different categories of landed priests.

21) A. Weber, *Kshemendra's Lokaprakasa, Indis-che Studien*, x viii, p.367.
22) Kalhana, *op.cit*, b.I, 184.
23) *Ibid*, b, iii, 12.
24) Syphilis seems to have been common in those days. The word *phirangha* has been used in the *Tantra* for curing the disease of syphilis which was cured by an unripe fruit called *bilvasena*. See V.N. Drabu, *op.cit*, p.43.
25) *Ibid*.
26) Kalhana *op.cit*, b, vii, 306. King Kalasa (1063-1089 A.D) used to "roam about from house to house during the night, finding no pleasure in the embraces of his own wives".b, vii, 305. The king was always surrounded by procurers and other parasites who induced him to adopt a shameless life by indulging in sexual intercourse with women. *Ibid*, 304. Queen Didda's infatuation for her paramour, Tunga is a well known episode of Kashmir history. She took "an affection for him, though she had [already] many paramours". She "knew no shame, and was filled with love for Tunga, killed Bhuyya by poison, as he had shown dissatisfaction". She had a platoon of officers who did procuring for her. *Ibid*, b, vi, 319-325.
27) For details see Dr. Abdul Ahad, *Accord*, *op.cit*.
28) Kalhana, *op.cit*, b, vii, 1147-1148. His seraglio was filled with the women of serious misconduct who were always excited by youthful appearances. His procurers frequently befooled him by procuring a variety of slave girls for sex in the guise of goddesses. *Ibid*, 1129, 1142.
29) *Rajatarangini* shows how widespread the practice of witchcraft was in ancient Kashmir. 'More than one king was responsible to have been killed by it'. *Ibid*, b,i, 331-335; b,iv, 88; 112, 124, 651, 686; b,v, 239; b,vi, 108, 121, 229; b,vii, 17, 133; b,viii, 1460, 2441. The Kashmiris still believe in the *genii*, elves and fairies. R.C. Kak, *op.cit*, p.xi.

The original purpose for which magic was used was economic. It was directly connected with food production and was used with this belief that men would be able to bring the forces of nature under control by it through collective rituals and other performances. Gradually it transformed itself into the esoteric art of the ruling or privileged class. The magico-*Trantric* rites of sexual-union were closely linked with-fertility. See E.O. James, *Pre-historic Religion*, p.172; Max Weber, *The Religion of India*,

p. 297; R.S. Sharma, *Material Milieu of Tantricism*, pp.175-189; Jean Naudou, *Buddhists of Kashmir*, pp. 143-147.

30) *Ibid.*

31) *Marco Polo*, (Yule), I, p. 175.

32) A woman, disguised as a Buddhist nun under the name of Vajraghanta, used to boast of being more than 1000 years old, and would distribute some prophecies and charms. "Exceeding all limits, she made her way to the monastery of *Krtyasrama* and made herself a nun under the name of *Vajraghanta.* She remained motionless in meditation. She took in the palms of her hands the bowl destined for alms which is congruous with virtue. She clothed herself in an old garment of a dark red colour similar to the passion which used to deceive her lovers. Formerly captured for the familiar swarm of her dissolute lovers, her hand, bent in order to beg, assumed a baldness which made her seem like half a pumpkin. Going from house to house, the mothers of families incessantly bent before her in order that she explains to them the *mandala*. She gave the performance of her perverse conduct. However, in distributing some recipes of seduction to the street walkers, in increasing the gains of merchants and in reciting *mantra* to the foolish, she succeeded in making herself highly venerated". Ksemendra quoted by Jean Naudou, *ibid*, p. 263.

33) These rituals had, infact, become the ideological weapon of the Brahmans. They exploited these rituals to their satisfaction in order to keep the classes, with conflicting interests, together and reconciled the lay devotees to their lot. As spiritual leaders they could easily motivate the people towards these rituals and, thereby, swell the ranks of their disciples who in return gave them their wives, daughters and even houses. This points to the existence of the feudal character of the relationship that existed between the Brahmans and the masses. See V.N. Drabu, *Saivagamas*, pp. 185, 267.

34) Gift giving was an important aspect of the socio-economic life of ancient Kashmir. The Brahmans fully used the *Trantric* rituals for receiving actual objects as gifts. The gift exchange involved certain categories of people in the larger context of social and economic relations. Mauss, Marcell, *The Gift*, pp.45ff, 53ff, 71ff.

35) For details see Kalhana, *op.cit*, b,i, 87-88, 90, 96-98, 100, 121, 175, 307, 311, 314, 340-341, 343; b,ii, 55; b,iii, 376, 481; b,iv, 9, 639, b,v, 24-24, 170n; 379, 403, 442; b,vi, 89, 336; b,vii, 182-185, 608, 898-899, 908; b,viii, 2408, 2419, 2420, 3355.

Land was an accepted token of wealth; a means of demonstrating status and keeping goods and people in circulation in a particular pattern. The donor was benefited by being admitted into *Sivadharma*. See *Politics of the Kula King.*

36) Vide V.N. Drabu, *op.cit*, p. 30, n53.

37) *An Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism*, preface.

OF HOPE AND DESPAIR

6

> Through the rise and fall of ambitions; through follies and successes; through strengths and weaknesses of Kashmir kingdom followed the story of its social mores that bogged it down in floundering morass of despair, hopes and confusions….
>
> —Dr. Ahad

History threw open the gates of Paradise to both good and evil, wrapping them in its time capsule to generate a great mass of ideas, actions, hopes, despairs, emotions and ambivalences to appear at intervals on its wider canvas, spanning over a long period of time, to get involved in an eternal struggle for shaping the destiny of society in their own way. The ups and downs that occurred in the process of this fierce combat between good and bad did not stall the onward movement of history. It continued its journey uninterruptedly to define the girth of trends and events that influenced the Kashmir society at various periods of its history.

Nature also collaborated with history to create a series of episodes of marvel and pathos, of heroism and cowardice, of fame and shame in the bygone age. The wholesome scenic beauty, salubrious climate, glittering springs, invigorating waters, enchanting meadows, invulnerably imposing mountains, and dazzling dales and exotic vales made Kashmir a fascinating heaven; an alluring Paradise of eternal bliss; an irresistible abode for both apostles and devils. The collateral benefits and damages of this unique combination of history and geography, thus, produced tremors of both delight and fear, the memories of which are still resonant in the literary sources of the Valley.

The eventful episode of this story commences with the beginning of the settlement of the *Nagas* under their leader Nila. Teeming with bright ideas and having an unusual insight into the social, political, and economic problems of his own times, the *Naga* chief was set on destroying the cultural and military hegemony of the *Pissacas*. His resolution in favour of better conditions and respectable place for his community won him tremendous public support and applause. And, eventually, with the help of his cohorts this elderly patriarch par excellence went through fire and water in hot pursuit of his bitter enemy with no respite from the fighting till he slew the *Pissaca* chief, drew away his followers, subdued the remaining *Pissacas*, and established his rule in the Valley.

The reign of Nila *Naga* was a brilliant and pleasant evocation of life in the ancient Kashmir which was filled with abundant prosperity, enormous stability and great fertility of mind. A vivid description of this state of affairs is given in *Nilamat Purana*, an invaluable compendium of ideas on Kashmir polity which conceived a monarchy that was not only to provide stability to society but also to make men good enough to enforce what was morally right and socially tenable.[1]

Although this kingdom was based on religion, it did not shirk from the responsibility of ensuring protection and sustenance for the people, and create conditions congenial to the development of their personality. The very initiative of King Nila to start a dialogue and discourse on the objectives of monarchy, which sprouted up all over the kingdom new buds of knowledge, learning, intellect and wisdom, suggests the presence of a stable socio-economic environment that was needed to promote the eventual compilation of *Nilamat Purana*. Mirroring the level of development of the society and presenting a panorama of rituals, customs and values, this literary source of considerable historical significance is a reliable indicator of different facets of the school of thought that became the ideological fountain head of the ancient Kashmiri mind.[2]

Contouring elegantly the essentialness of the societal frame of early Kashmir, the *Naga* rule set examples of steadfastness, forbearance, maturation, benefaction, confidence and great gusto that did enormous good to agriculture, trade and arts and crafts and facilitated the flowering of Harwan and Hutmur cultures.

The Harwan and Hutmur were the boom cultures; the hallmarks of prosperity and plenty, fine craftsmanship, and a real great boom for the Kashmiris whose spirits boosted immensely under the pinnacle of urbanization/ sedentrization. Even if history has very little to speak about the grand old days of these cultural formations, there is a great deal in archaeology to appreciate the level of their qualities and achievements. Resplendent in their indigenous décor, workmanship and brilliant artistry, the archaeological remains of Harwan, Hutmur and other sites do not fail us to form a conspectus of the native genius that was expended for making the transition from good to great possible. These interestingly designed relics of distant and distinct past are proficient enough to make Kashmir swoon with pride.[3]

Equally important and interesting is the numismatics which helps us to discern the position of trade and commerce within the ancient cultural matrix of Kashmir.[4] The exciting discovery of hordes of coins which laid buried under the debris of extinct cultures amply reveals the details of the volumes of brisk trade that was carried on the king's domain and with the outside world through regularly arranged markets.[5] The roaring trade, the growing affluence, the abounding blessings of urban life-style, and the resultant fat of the land gave a major boost to building activity; curiously paving way for the construction of "ninety-six lakhs" of houses in the city of Srinagar alone.[6] Originally founded in 250 B.C., and, subsequently, extended by King Pravarasena II, who named it Pravarapura, this city came to be adorned with mansions reaching clouds. Based on a well organized marketing system, the city presented a fascinating look with the 'streams meeting, pure and lovely, at pleasure-residences and near market-streets'.[7]

Such was the *belle tournure* of those classic days; so exquisite and comely, so vivid and stable as not to vanish into the frothy ocean of treacherous cross-currents of time, nor to fizzle out in the wake of fierce storms of religio-cultural vandalism.

Formed with the contributions of royals as well as pelbians whose names are lost in the wilderness of bygone times, not extant even in the earliest accounts, this tremendous spectrum, with all its social and economic ramifications, is spread over a wider canvas of archaeology and numismatics with no ostensible support of recorded history as we have seen. The scope of its scoring success continued widening to cradle various formations of the

Kashmiri culture which stood overwhelmingly glowing at times and nauseatingly yawning on certain occasions amongst a crowd of kings of substance and their petty imbecile successors.

If patronage of architecture, arts, crafts, trade and agriculture, foundations of cities, towns and markets, generosity towards people, peace, stability, law, and order are the basic ingredients necessary for weaving the story of good and great kings, the names of Pravarasena-II[8], Lalitaditya-Muktapida,[9] Avantivarman,[10] and Uchchala[11] furnish excellent examples. In the long list of kings and queens of the ancient lore, they far outshine the rest of the class. Their scintillating performance, notable contributions and outstanding achievements place them in the forefront of history to merit the remembrance of posterity. Pravarasena II displayed, as we have seen, a fine sense of town planning by transforming the old capital city, extending its limits with a careful maintenance of facilities to dispense with the exigencies of growing urbanization, making elaborate arrangements for marketing of goods and brisk trading, and rearranging streams and canals that intersected the city to render available smooth flow of water both for drinking and irrigating agriculture lands on the periphery of Srinagar, 'Venice of the East'.[12]

But this gigantic project of remodelling the city so engrossed Pravarasena as not to permit him to even think of the countryside whose teeming population was deprived of the royal benevolence; they had to wait till the appearance of Lalitaditya on the scene to come into the focus of his elaborate scheme of nation building. But nevertheless his era was a prelude to what Lalitaditya achieved during his reign and that made him worthy of greatness.[13] Lalitaditya began his reign on a confident firm belief that not unless he strengthened and widened his resource base by the expansion of the State through the glory of conquests his generosity and public welfare programme would fail to yield desired results. Thus, he set out to accomplish his mission by extending his immense conquests beyond Central Asia to India, swooping with his army upon the territories between the banks of the "*Yamuna* to that of the *Kalika*" and then:[14]

> With the treasures and pearls he proceeded to his own land as the lion goes to the mountain.[15]

And:

> Having taken one crore when he proceeded for the conquest of the world, he presented on his return eleven crores to the shrine of *Siva* as an expiatory offering.[16]

In utter perturbation his rivals hurriedly deserted their homes as the king drew nearer, leaving behind their women-folk, who, as Kalhana writes further:

> Made the resolute hearts of his warriors melt, not by displaying the fronts of their elephants but by showing their high breasts.[17]

Lalitaditya's military acumen and outbursts caused tremors of fear in the ranks of his opponents, obliging them to the necessity of suing for peace which he agreed in return of their willingness to tolerate the humiliation of shaving half their heads and carrying their arms at their back as a mark of their subjugation.[18]

The huge wealth amassed through conquests, and other resources available with the kingdom were utilized in creating ample avenues of employment by establishing a series of water wheels to amplify irrigation facilities,[19] and by the construction of buildings, shrines and towns[20] the remains of which are still echoing the imprints of the long prosperous days of the great king.[21] His generosity was, however, largely extended to the institutions of faith more so because they were ideally suited to mould public opinion in his favour. The king built a group of temples at *Parihasapura*, his new capital, besides the superb sun temple of Martand, the most striking specimen of the ancient architecture of Kashmir.[22]

This favourable atmosphere was not destined to last long; it was short lived. The amazing speed of prosperity came to a grinding halt when Lalitaditya's weak successors began playing havoc with the economy of the country by neglecting its irrigation system and dissipating its resources on pleasure-seeking;[23] when recurrence of devastating floods began causing enormous decline to the country's annual produce; forcing the famine-stricken people to buy a *khari* of rice for ten hundred and fifty *dinnars* which money they generally borrowed from inveterate money-lenders by pawning whatever was left with them.[24] All expectations of winning a return to normalcy and good days were confounded by the feuding barons,fortune seekers, rapacious *kayasthas* (administrators) and deceitful *purohitas* (religious leaders), whose nefarious deeds and pretty naff ideas created volatile situation that killed the feelings of security, joy and contentment to be restored only by the strong will of the most generous, conscientious and peace-loving monarch. Kashmir found this ruler in Avantivarman who was proclaimed king to give meaning to the hope of thrashing forces of disruption and despair into submission.[25]

King Avantivarman was not merely just, but determined to be the best by giving much-needed rest to the country through the resurrection and redistribution of the watercourses and streams on a permanent basis which irrigated fields unfailingly, increasing their produce manifold and, thus, bringing down considerably the soaring price of paddy, the staple diet of the Kashmiris.[26] He appreciated the nuance that he could easily fail to win the trust of his people if he neglected agriculture, the mainstay of their economy.

A major portion of the agriculture land remained submerged due to the excess of water. It was a cause of great worry and frequent famines. The king appreciated the problem and realized the need of taking immediate and effective action. He engaged the services of a native engineer of great ingenuity, Suyya[27] to solve this harping enigma. The enormities of this national calamity were brought under control no sooner than Suyya devised a unique and economically viable device of dredging operations at Baramulla. He threw money in the river which attracted the attention of the famine – stricken villagers who jumped into the water and dragged out mud and rocks while searching for *dinnars* and, thus, cleared the Jehlum.[28]

While his innovative schemes, numerous foundations (notably Avantipora), munificent patronage of learning, and curbing of anti - social elements and restoring peace and stability reflect his unrelenting urge for becoming Avantivarman the great, his prohibition of killing of animals eloquently echo his concern for the public sentiments and his emotional involvement in the prosperity of agriculture.[29]

But these untiring efforts of the king to release his country from the nasty odour of poverty, gloom and doom evaporated into the air of political wilderness that enveloped the Paradise after his death. The successors who followed him became unforgettable not for their virtues but for their vices.[30]

If the hapless Kashmiris were still harbouring any hope of improvement in the given situation that too was shattered by the accession of King Samkaravarman who devised peculiar methods of taxing people, inflicting a lasting blow to economy, trade and commerce.[31] Not caring a straw for the already impoverished lot of the people, the king elaborated his tax-machine (and fiscal exactions), bringing within its fold even the religion and learning. He imposed corvee or forced labour (*begar*) on villagers and fined those feeble old villagers whose lukewarm response to his demands enraged him. Lacking understanding of general public feelings and opinions, he showed enormous disrespect for temples whose desecration made him yet another iconoclast, foremost being Mihirakula.[32] He presented a curious blend of naivety and ineptitude; he entrusted the *kayasthas* (officials) with enormous powers to fleece people and engaged himself in plundering whatever was of value at *Parihasapura*, Lalitaditya's capital, and Pattan, the main centre of industry. The king did not even spare the public opinion-makers, the scholars and the poets whom he often put to immense humiliation.[33]

King Harsa (1089-1101 A.D.) continued King Samkaravarman's policy of iconoclasm by defiling the statues of 'gods' and pouring over their faces excrements and urine.[34] He not only demolished temples but also plundered from these the valuable treasures.[35] Kalhana describes the king in these words:[36]

> How is it to be related that story of King Harsa which has seen the rise of all enterprises and yet shows the absence of all policy; which displays an excessive [assertion of the] ruling power and yet has witnessed excessive disregard of orders; which [fells] of excessive abundance of liberality and of [equally] excessive persistence in confiscation; which gives delight by an abundant [display of] compassion and shocks by the superabundance of murders; which is rendered charming by the redundance of pious works and spoiled by the superabundance of sins;...

Although King Uchchala (1101-1111 A.D.)[37]made several attempts to bring some improvement in the plight of the people by his impartial administration of justice; by his redressal of public grievances; and by his periodical distribution of State grain at cheap rates,[38]his reign proved merely an oasis of calm in a noisy household where much huffing and puffing made their ugly reappearance with the treacherous murder of the king; allowing the monarchy to slip into the quagmire of intrigues and assassinations.[39]

The tragic intervention of cruelty, scourge, disappointment, malevolence and murder on the course of history pushed forward a fickle multitude of power-seekers, pretenders and conspirators who seemed determined to purchase the crown on any price. And in the race that ensued, the contenders, writes R.C. Kak (Ex-Prime Minister of Kashmir):[40]

> Squandered their revenues, queens bartered their honour, the son intrigued against his father, and the father set assassins upon his offspring; all lost their sense of truth and dignity for the acquisition, however temporary, of fatal reward.

Then through the rise and fall of ambitions; through follies and successes; through strengths and weaknesses of Kashmir kingdom followed the story of its social mores that bogged it down in a floundering morass of despair, hopes and confusions till the Crescent began sparkling in the Paradise.[41]

The extremes of political situations, emanating from the imbecility of monarchy, imperilled the safety of the kingdom during the reign of weak rulers and affected the economic and political conditions of the land so badly as to induce the incursions of mighty conquerors of the time. The most notable among them was the talented and formidable Mahmud of Ghazni who had already stepped into the subcontinent to evoke a good response to his zest and zeal.[42] But he failed miserably, not once but twice, in his Kashmir expeditions due to his own folly of launching these during severe winters, rather than the prowess of Kashmiris.[43] Though a brilliant strategist and a daring general, Mahmud could not appreciate the difficulties and risks involved in venturing out in extremely cold weathers towards Kashmir. His failure to physically occupy the land in the face of severe winters, difficult passes and the protection guaranteed by its invulnerable mountains could not, however, stop the penetration of the new ideas he had introduced in the subcontinent and which were vibrating with full vigour across the frontiers of Kashmir and waiting for an opportune time to strike their roots in this hilly kingdom. And the opportunity came when all decks were cleared by Dulacha, a Mongol invader of tremendous substance.

Dulacha's Kashmir invasion in 1320 A.D., represents yet another episode of its annals of turmoil and turbulence; a most critical juncture of its history of unwelcome intrusions, first being that of Mihirakula. By slowly sapping its strength and vitality and hurting its ethos, identity and confidence beyond proportions, these bloody intrusions diametrically differed in their essence and purpose. Mihirakula was motivated by religious reasons to act in the direction of restoring *Shaivite* cult, which objective he achieved by unleashing a reign of terror, destruction and massacre; whereas Dulacha had no ideological mission to accomplish and the sole purpose of his invasion was loot and plunder that he carried with the savagery of 17,000 Mongols under his command, who gathered, stormed out and stormed into the Valley that was theirs to take.[44] And smothered whatever lay in the way. Men, women, children, soldiers, kindred souls whoever stood in the way was sent to hell. They squeezed the land of its wealth, gold, grain, cattle. And vandalized the once flourishing homes of the Kashmiris, dishonouring their women, forcing their king, Sahadeva to abandon them for eight months which period presents a sordid story that is depicted by Jonaraja, Kalhana's successor in history writing:[45]

> When Dulacha had left the place, those people of Kashmir who had escaped capture issued out of their strongholds, as mice do out of their holes. When the violence caused by the *Rakshasa* (Demon) Dulacha ceased, the son found not his father, nor did brother meet his brother. Kashmir became almost like a region before the creation, a vast field with men without food and full of grass.

The third intrusion occurred in 1320 A.D., at a time when the hapless Kashmiris were still captives of all kinds of indignities of the Mongols; when Dulacha was busy quenching his passions; when the hilly kingdom had been forsaken by its king to become an easy prey to an intruder who in the immediate vicinity of its boarders was seriously preparing to try to swim across its troubled rivers; not to gather together wealth and women; not to propagate his faith; but to spatter his political creed by basing his hope on the crown of Kashmir. This intruder was Rinchin, young and energetic son of Lha-chen of Ladakh.[46] He was forced to flee his native place where his father had succumbed politically as well as physically before the local powers that had raised the banner of revolt against him after the death of the Mongol suzerain of the vast and remote plateau of Ladakh. Rinchin entered Kashmir via the Zojila Pass and took shelter with Rama Chandra, the Prime Minister and Commander-in-chief of Kashmir army under Sahadeva who had fled to Kishtwar.

Astute as he was, Rinchin assiduously studied the prevailing murky situation of the Valley during his asylum and ultimately succeeded in cultivating the support of one of the most formidable nobles of the kingdom, Shah Mir[47] who too had come from Swat to try his luck. Besides his beloved Kota,[48] Rama Chandra's beautiful daughter, with whom he had fallen in deep love, supported him. With this support, Rinchin was able to strike against Rama Chandra. He had already spoiled the attempts of the fugitive king to re-establish himself in the Valley with the help of a Kishtwar tribe. Rama Chandra was killed and Rinchin assumed the title of king and cleared the ground for very decisive changes to take place in the socio-economic and religio-cultural environment of the Valley.

Thus, Rinchin's intrusion was an impressive delineation of a qualitative improvement in the situation that was besieged with chaos and crisis; a forerunner not only of peace, prosperity, justice and order the Kashmiris thirsted for most but also of a reign which Jonaraja has described as a "golden age" that was creased into louder angelic smiles as we shall see.

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) *Nilamat Purana* envisaged a State that was to promote necessary conditions for the maintenance of society. It was based on *dharma, karma*, and *artha* and aimed at the benefit of all classes. It imposed penalties for the offences committed by the people. For details see V.N. Drabu, *op.cit*, pp.22-23.
2) *Ibid*, Kalhana, *op.cit*, Vol.II, pp. 376-377.
3) See chapter, *Burzhome to Hutmur—A Social Differentiation & Urbanization.*
4) Kalhana, *op.cit*, Vol.II, pp. 308-328.
5) Two hordes of copper coins, numbering 137 and 300 respectively, were unearthed from Maidan Chogul, Handwara, District Baramulla in 1988 when the present author was Director, Archaeology. These coins, now available with Srinagar Museum, throw a flood of light on the volumes of brisk trade carried with the outside world. Also see Apendix, "D"
6) Kalhana, b, i, 104 & note.
7) *Ibid*, note 104; b, iii, note 339-349; b, iii, 358-364.
8) For Pravarasena II see, Kalhana, b, iii, 109, 123, 265, 280, 285, 288, 319, 324-335; 336-363; 350, 374; b,iv, 311; b,viii, 2408, 3420.
9) For Lalitaditya see *ibid*, b,iv, 43; 126, 133, 147-180; 182-193; 194; 219-241; 246-263; 277-306; 323, 340, 366; b,v, 69; b,vii, 1428; Vol.I, 67, 89, 90-93; Vol.II, 303.
10) For Avantivarman see *ibid*, b, iv, 715; 719, b, v, 18, 32, 43, 48, 64, 72, 121, 126; b, viii, 1961, 3420.
11) For Uchchala see *ibid*, b,vii, 1183, 1196, 1254-1256, 1301, 1326, 13337, 1385, 1539,1583, 1725; b,viii, 2, 16, 39, 45, 77, 85, 123, 162, 193, 208, 243, 278, 327, 1961, 3442-3444.
12) *Ibid*, b, iii, 358-364.
13) Note 9, above.
14) *Ibid*, b, iv, 145.
15) *Ibid*, b, iv, 176.
16) *Ibid*, b, iv, 189.
17) *Ibid*, b, iv, 173.
18) *Ibid*, 178-179.
19) 'At *Cakradhara* he made an arrangement for conducting the water of the *Vitasta* and distributing it to various villages by the construction of a series of waterwheels'. *Ibid*, 191.
20) For his foundations see *ibid*, b, iv, 190, 192, 193, 194-206, 207-211, 214.

21) For glory and grandeur of Lalitaditya's buildings, towns and temples see Dr. Abdul Ahad, *A Project Report for the Development of Parihasapura*, Directorate of Archaeology, Archives & Museums, J&K State, Srinagar.

22) *Ibid.*

23) See Kalhana, *op.cit*, b, iv & b, v; b, vi; R.C. Kak, *op.cit*, p.20. These successors often indulged in excessive sensual enjoyment. b, iv, 398. Their fiscal exactions and extravagant expenditure on pleasure-seeking created havoc. Vol.I, pp.100-113; b, v, 165-176; 184-192.

24) *Ibid*, b, ii, 17-54; b,v, 271; b, vii, 1219; b, viii, 1206.

25) *Ibid*, Vol.I, pp.97-98; b, v, 64-123.

26) *Ibid*, b, v, 69-112; 121-122.

27) *Ibid*, Vol, I, pp.07-98; Vol.II, 421, 428; b, v, 72-74, 109, 118; b, vi, 133.

28) *Ibid*, b, v, 84-112.

29) *Ibid*, b, v, 44, 64, 71.

30) For his successors see *ibid*, 157-205; R.C. Kak, *op.cit*, pp.22-24.

31) *Ibid.*

32) *Ibid*, b,v, 161-162; 165-107,

33) *Ibid*, b, v, 181.

34) *Ibid*, b, vii, 1090-1091.

35) *Ibid*, 1092.

36) *Ibid*, 869-873.

37) For Uchchala see *ibid*, b,vii, 1183, 1196, 1254, 1256, 1301, 1326, 1337, 1385, 1539, 1583; b,viii, 2, 16, 39, 45, 77, 85, 123, 193, 243, 278, 287, 306, 327, 1961, 3442-3444; Vol.I, 114-115, 118.

38) R.C. Kak, *op.cit*, p.25.

39) *Ibid.*

40) *Ibid*, p.23.

41) "The happy Valley" was made unhappy; 'the State of Kashmir in the tenth and eleventh centuries forms a close parallel with that of Italy under Pope Alexander VI., and Caesar Borgia. But the Italian Popes and their satellites often differed from the Kashmiri kings in that their evil lives were at any rate relieved by the display of commanding talent.' *Ibid*, p.24.

42) It was Mahmud of Ghazni who pioneered the Muslim incursions into the subcontinent. He made his advances towards Kashmir twice, once in 1015 A.D., and second time in 1021 A.D., both times through the Tosamaidan pass.

43) Mahmud of Ghazni failed in his Kashmir expeditions due to the Valley's inaccessible mountains and severe winters. Alberuni, who was present during one of Ghazni's expeditions writes:

After a while, when the snow began to fall and the season became intensely cold, the enemy received reinforcements from Kashmir. See Alberuni, *Kitab-ul-Hind* (Sachu), I, p.208.

44) Jonaraja calls this Mongol invader Dulacha. He writes: "Dulacha, the commander-in-chief of the army of the king of Karmaserra (Khwarazm) came to (invade) Kashmir, just as a lion comes into the cave of the deer". Jonaraja, *Rajatarangini*, (Dutt), p.16. It is said that Dulacha had 17,000 soldiers with him to carry out wholesale destruction in Kashmir during the second decade of the 14th century. For details see ibid, pp.15-18; *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, ff. 10-11.

45) Jonaraja, *ibid*, pp.17-18.

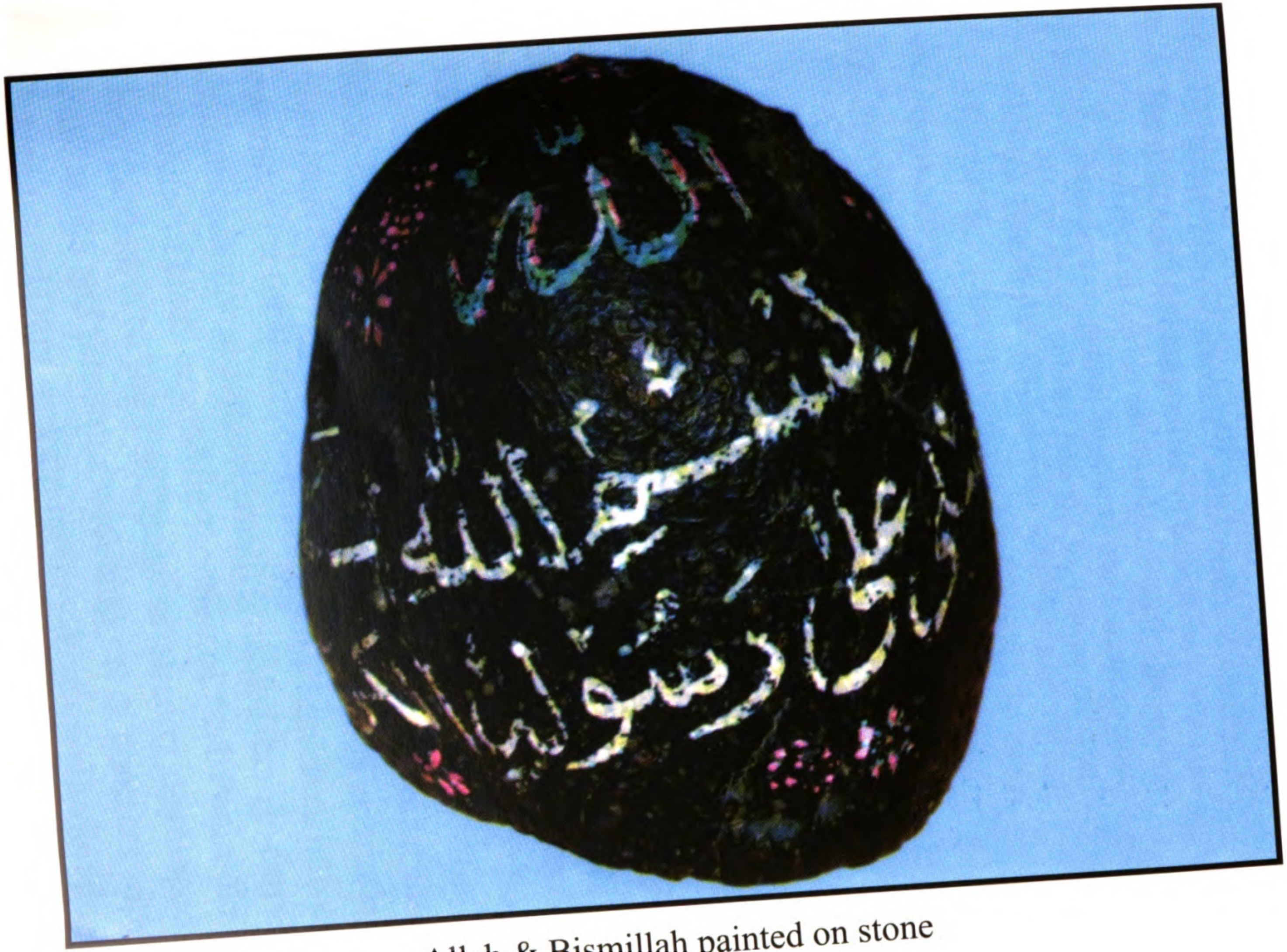
46) Lha-Chan-Ragyalbu Rinchin was a Ladakhi Buddhist, son of an influential chief. He fled his native place when his father was murdered in a civil war fostered by rival Ladakhi factions, namely the *Kalamanyas* and the *Vakatanyas*. He sought refuge in Kashmir where political conditions favoured him to become its ruler and, thereby, change the course of events. He became a Muslim and adopted the name of Sultan Sadr - ud - Din. For details see *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, f. 10 a; Franke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, II, p.98; Haidar Malik, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, p.23.

47) *Rajatarangini* (Stein), Vol.I, p.130; R.C. Kak, *op.cit*, pp.27-29.

48) For Kota Rani see R.C. Kak, *ibid*, pp.28-30.

Part – II

THE STRENGTHENING OF KASHMIR'S MARKED IDENTITY — THE OPENING OF POPULAR MINDS



Allah & Bismillah painted on stone

Conquered tribesmen, travelling merchants, and wondering Sufis brought Islam to peoples outside the Middle East. The diffusion of Islam and the conversion of new peoples brought Islamic societies into being in inner Asia, India, Southern Asia..... and other regions. These societies were formed by the integration of the local pre-Islamic civilizations with the universal aspects of Islam to create a new family of human communities. The religious way of life and identity borne by the 'Ulama' and the Sufis again became articulated in parochial associations such as lineage, tribal, village, and urban communities and States.

—LapiduS

The onset of the 14th century was marked by a great historical upheaval in Kashmir which had the potential of restructuring the society along new lines under the influence of Islam.... Massive change unleashed dynamic forces of far-reaching consequences, inspiring people to transform their lives on the basis of an economic system obtaining from the establishment of *Karkhanas* and mode of production intimately connected with an elaborate marketing system.

—Dr. Ahad

OF ANGELIC SMILES

7

> The country [of Kashmir] may be conquered by the force of spiritual merit, but not by the force of soldiers.
>
> —Kalhana

> Islam made its way into Kashmir not by forcible conquest but by gradual conversion, for which the influx of foreign adventurers both from the South and from Central Asia had prepared the ground
>
> —M.A. Stein

Blossoming in the midst of Arab deserts that were torn apart by civil strife, tribal bickering and chaotic history, Islam stepped across Middle East to embark on worldwide diffusion, profoundly influencing societies of Eastern, Central and South Asia and reached Kashmir much before 1320 A.D., to effect far-reaching changes in its religious, political and social life and to rescue its economy from sliding into a state of virtual collapse. With its inherent reformist zeal and universal appeal, Islam opened up whole new vistas for the desert dwellers to put themselves into a civilizational mould that, eventually, enabled them to carry the banner of Islam beyond the frontiers of Arab Peninsula. They carried it to the core areas of already developed civilizations and through a widening net of contacts with Byzantine and Ottoman empires they developed a vibrating form of Islamic civilization well defined by cosmopolitan outlook, universal brotherhood, oneness of God, and social thought deeply antagonistic to wealth accumulation and conspicuous consumption.[1]

During a long period of six centuries (700-1300 A.D.) this synthesis encouraged Islamic civilization to restructure its institutional frame-work in consonance with the melieue of times. The innovative political system, an elaborate bureaucracy, a disciplined police and military organization, a well organized irrigation and revenue system, and appropriate social engineering through the medium of a network of orphanages and *Khankahs* and well equipped educational infrastructure envisaged a major role for Islamic civilization to play in the world affairs.

Before splashing its fragrant perfume onto the vales and dales of Kashmir, Islam had already started knocking at the fragile doors of the Valley while being busy in its profound mission of transforming a multitude of nomadic — pastoral and sedentary peoples in the immediate vicinity of Central Asia. This vast and varied region, comprising agricultural and steppe lands and scattered oases, had become a new and vibrant reservoir of the Islamic beliefs, ideology and identity after clearing it from protracted crises and confusions that prevailed there due to increasingly conflicting interests of pastoral Kazakh, settled Tatar, agricultural Turk and Chegtai, and city peoples of famous cities of Bakhara, Samarqand, Ishfahan and Iran.[2] The Central Asian storehouse of Islamic civilization had largely superseded the Arabic one. Essentially based on the principle of *falah* or social justice[3]— a purposive and positive methodical approach to redeem the awfulness of the social situation of the desert land and facilitate the formation of *Millat* or Muslim-brotherhood and the *Ummah,* the first Islamic State[4] — Islam under went a great many changes after it extended the sphere of its influence beyond the frontiers of Arabia and brought under its fold innumerable peoples of Central Asia where they were subjected to intensive exploitation and oppression. The progressive outlook of Islam — not having any provision for any exclusive priestly class or for the police establishment; but providing adequate space for the promotion of public works on voluntary basis and the accommodation of non-Muslims, subject to the condition that they lived amicably and did not indulge in activities detrimental to the security of *Ummah* — was a great inspirational force for so many people, so different and dispersed, to become Muslims.[5] But in the course of its expansion, Islam had to assimilate the underlying trends of Asiatic culture and politics so as to position itself on a sound basis to meet the challenges of agrarian economic structure that was sharply different to the mercantile interests of Arabia, the place of its birth. Thus, Islam showed considerable flexibility in changing its demeanour to accommodate an exclusive ruling class, religious clerics and a well-knit police force for the purpose of organizing a very strong Central Government that was an absolute necessity for maintaining an effective system of irrigation, and fertilization of land, a vital source of income to the State of Central Asian Order.[6]

The formation of a variegated assortment of peoples into classes such as *umara* (aristocracy), *shurfa* (nobility), *wuzra* (courtiers), *mansabdars* and *fojdars* (military officials), *kutwals* (police officers) and so on was historically needed to accelerate the proselytizing activities of Islam and the bandwagon of its civilization and empire. At the head of these classes was the emperor or *Zill-e-illahi* who assured the prosperity of his subjects and spared no effort in upholding the order of the empire against chaos. The new Muslim empire also intensified the social individuality by improving and enhancing the linguistic, religious and legal conditions through a separate priestly class that comprised *muftis, qazees, ulamas* and *moulvis,* the people thoroughly versed with the *Sheriat,* the Quran and the *Sunna.*[7]

But in course of time the new political and religious elite became thoroughly obsessed with its own interests, exhibiting curious social behaviour (well disposed towards accumulation of wealth and conspicuous consumption) which paved the way for disenchantment with crucial ramifications, expressing themselves in the emergence of divergent schools of law and theology; the most prominent being the *Shia* and *the Sunni* and *the Sufi* orders.[8] Bitter rivalries among them and strong State support for both the *Shia* and the *Sunni* sects hastened their diffusion. Besides, the early worldliness of the *Khalafat* had come under cloud and there were movements which aimed to return this institution to its ideal incumbents.[9]

However, the most redeeming feature of this period of socio- religious dichotomy was the emergence of *Sufism,*[10] an objective development which aimed to resolve these contradictions with its two pronged approach: religious and humanistic. In religious terms it endeavoured to revive the spiritual aspirations and religious practices of the Maccan and Madenan Islam, and in humanistic terms it taught how to overcome the divided self to attain wholeness of being. It was a movement towards greater freedom of self; a movement that questioned eloquently and daringly the value of wealth versus poverty, conspicuous consumption versus simplicity, dogma versus liberality, and unity versus discord; movement of deep resentment against the dogmatism of priesthood. Just as the *ulamas* and *the muftis* evolved and fostered dogmatic approach, the *Sufis* and the mystics revived and promoted the ideas of social justice and brotherhood, and combined, as Franz says:[11]

> The idea of cultivating virtue with the system of forming associations whose members understood to distinguish themselves for purity, generosity, service of neighbour or stranger etc.

Evidently, the *Sufism* had a pronounced social, philanthropic and humanistic character which encouraged an immense multiplication of the number of its *murids* or followers who propagated brotherhood, equality and justice.

These *murids* or ascetics cultivated emotional, psychological, sociological, cultural and spiritual awareness and devoted themselves to teaching and preaching. They articulated a theory of spiritual progress based on the Quran and religious practices of early Islam, and often counselled the rulers and administrators to follow a path of justice and morality. The movement of *Sufism* was, thus, directed towards greater social justice and moral uplift; it became widely popular with the masses; both *Sunnis* and *Shias*.[12] To the *Sunnis,* it represented a noble quest for salvation and truth, while to the *Shias* it was a coherent way of life which aimed at the realization of a mystical reunion of the great *Imam* with God. Both these sects differed profoundly in the emotional mood through which they comprehended worldly reality, but they exhibited much resemblance in the practice of their daily lives and in the collective mission of carrying forward the banner of Islamic revolution.[13]

It was through these *Sufis* that Islam reached Kashmir much before 1320 A.D., when King Vajraditya ruled the Valley (725-732 A.D.), who, though cruel and sensuous, threw open his kingdom to welcome Islamic ideas and practices which 'befitted the *Mleechas*' (Muslims), and appear to have been introduced by Hameem, and Abu Dilf Misri bin Mihlal al-Yandui, the foremost Muslim visitors to the country.[14] King Harsa (1089-1101 A.D.), a poet and a lover of music and fine arts and various sciences, went a step further. Tremendously influenced, as he was, by the Islamic culture and Muslim etiquette, he introduced elaborate Muslim fashions in dress and ornaments and recruited *Mleechas* in his army. So profound was the influence of this cultural diffusion that the Kashmiri society readily received the Muslim traditions and blended them with their own, inspiring writers, especially Ksemendra to make full use of words such as *dabir, Sultan, ganj, Shah, silah* etc; in their writings.[15] By the beginning of the 14th century the *Sufis,* in collaboration with the Muslim traders of Central Asia, had already established a colony in Kashmir where they cultivated *Sufi* virtues of social equality which seized the heart of the socially unequal and culturally impoverished Kashmiris.[16]

During this period Kashmir presented a scene of chaos and confusion; of immoral terpsichore and depravity of normal behaviour; of civil crisis and political instability; of satanic voices and abnormal choices, and of abysmal conditions which we have discussed in the foregoing pages. Beset with difficulties, pressures and dangers, and desperation and despondency, Kashmir was, thus, internally flawed; its administrative system had totally degenerated; there was no Central Government, the nerve centre of the kingdom which could organize its finances, public works and irrigation system and carry out regular inspections of peripheral provinces and surrounding villages. Such a decline of the kingdom was at once a political, a social, an economic and a cultural break up of the society which led to its eventual collapse; rendering Kashmiris extremely helpless before a ferocious Mongol onslaught, and as mute spectators to the process of entrusting of the reins of Government into the hands of an outsider and a refuge from Ladakh namely Rinchin.

As a consequence of these conditions the Kashmiris were eagerly yearning for a change; a wholesale change for which a strong desire had already been stimulated by the Central Asian *Sufis* who were living amidst socially condemned Kashmiris; eating, sitting, rejoicing, celebrating festivals, and praying together in a collective social order without any reservation or discrimination.[17] They were waiting for an opportunity to get rid of their ghastly and sickly pallor through a couple of shakings of the very process that had given rise to their misfortunes and misery. And the opportunity came when the Mongols invaded Kashmir and when their own king, Sahadeva deserted them by fleeing the country to save his life. They declined to acknowledge the king after his return on the eve of Dulacha's departure as they had been betrayed. They awaited a man who could be their king; no matter what his race, religion, language or place of birth was. This king they found in Rinchin who was supported by yet another non- Kashmiri, Shah Mir (who had settled in Kashmir), to ascend the throne on 6 October 1320 A.D.[18]

Acting with astute shrewdness and insight and after taking stock of the situation, he, eventually, decided to honour the public opinion that was very deeply disposed towards change; a total and a comprehensive change of the Kashmir's institutions, organizations and behavioural patterns in consonance with the spiritual, intellectual and social merit of *Sufism.*[19] The new king, thus, embraced Islam, taking the name of Sultan Sadr-ud-Din and, thereby, setting a trend for others to follow in great numbers with tremendous zeal; to become real loyal protagonists of the first Sultanate of Kashmir; to vindicate the forecast of Pandit Kalhana, the first great historian of the subcontinent, that 'the country may be conquered by the force of spiritual merit but not by the force of soldiers'.

The call of *Allah-u-Akbar,* God is great atop the mosque, built by Rinchin, resounded through the hills and city walls with such equal vigorous rhythms that every Kashmiri woke up from his restlessness to utter the *Qalima: "La – e – laha illalah Muhammad-un- Rasul Allah"*. There is no God but *Allah* and Muhammad is His Messenger. Even the die-hards reconciled to this situation, and indeed, virtually capitulated and this strengthened the new regime. This environment, no doubt, attracted the attention of more and more Muslims from Central Asia but their move towards Kashmir was temporarily stalled by the sporadic infighting among the contenders for power that followed Rinchin's death in 1323 A.D.[20] Consequently, history chose to repeat itself, and after a few hiccups propelled Shah Mir[21] and Kota Rani[22] towards deciding who would be the sole ruler. Since Kota Rani proved highly impatient to capture the throne, the forces of history finally sided with the astute Shah Mir.[23] He ascended the throne with great local support and proclaimed himself Sultan Shams-ud- Din in 1339 A.D. and, thus, cleared the way for the establishment of a dynasty that ruled Kashmir for 222 years (brought down only by the Mughal Imperium) and established centralized State legitimized in Muslim terms; having enough scope for the diffusion of Islamic culture and intellectual enlightenment, and for the accommodation of Central Asian merchants, scholars and craftsmen who played a vital and a complex role in shaping the future of the Valley in the years to come.

An impressive number of Muslims began to migrate to Kashmir owing to unsettled conditions in their native land. Most notable among them were: Sayyid Jalal-ud-Din, Sayyid Taj-ud- Din, Sayyid Bilal Shah etc; who came to Kashmir after Bulbul Shah.[24] Bringing with them the nuances of Central Asian civilization and ethos and concepts of an elaborate Sultanate, they remained in close proximity to the seat of power. The court accepted their intellectual, spiritual, social and economic ideas largely based on the *mamalat* (public good) part of Islam.[25] Thus, their influence and cultural paradigms began manifesting themselves in the policies formulated by the Kashmir Sultanate for the socio-economic transformation of the society which resulted in the introduction of arts and crafts, reorganization of indigenous trades, mobilization of mineral resources, rejuvenation of irrigation system and industry and commerce, and reorganization of education and public works systems. The indigenous factory system witnessed total overhauling when *Karkhanas* were introduced to:[26]

a) transform the old system of production relations into new one;
b) replace small-scale marketing by large-scale marketing; and
c) change the wage system to improve the lot of artisans.

Similarly *madrasas* (schools) were established to widen the vision of the people and to enable them to differentiate and discriminate between right and wrong, justice and injustice, and moral and immoral.[27]

Starting with a promising note of intensive socio-economic change, Islam became a popular faith, attracting Kashmiris en masse. Low castes found in it a better status denied to them by the caste-Hindus. The Brahman administrators, who for their proximity to the Sultanate were looked down-upon by their community, adopted it to find a relief from ostracism and to continue to be a part of the nobility. The war like tribes of *Damaras* and *Ekengas* accepted it to find a respectable place in the army and police. The common Kashmiris moved towards it to become potential beneficiaries of its *Karkhana* system which provided ample opportunities of employment. Such a phenomenon was bound to give way to a mutual assimilation of indigenous and non- local peoples on the basis of a new identity; a coherent Muslim identity, which in the course of history acquired native traits to become the Kashmiri Muslim identity.

The spread of Islam in Kashmir through peaceful means and good-will ushered in a rare phenomenon of silent and smooth revolution which fostered the growth of political structure comparable with that of Central Asia and compatible with the ideas and traditions of Kashmir's agrarian culture. As a corollary of this, a powerful Sultanate — a replica of the Central Asian model which was a symbol of the fusion of Persian and Arab Islamic civilizations — came into existence that was lavishly replenished with a hierarchical management system; comprising *wazirs, diwans, muftis, qazees, ulamas, jagirdars* etc; whose emergence was objectively needed for carrying on the administration; for providing an organized and effective system of irrigation, finance, law and so forth.

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1) For Islam and its history see *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, new edition; Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 3 Vols; A.J. Arberry, *Religion in the Middle East*, 2 Vols;v J.J. Saunders, *A History of Medieval Islam*; F. Rahman, Islam; G.E.Von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam*; Shahid, *Pre-Islamic Arabia (Cambridge History of Islam)*; M.M. Bravmann, *The Spiritual Background of Early Islam.*
2) See *Cambridge History of Iran*; R. Fyre, *Islamic Iran & Central Asia*; A.K. S. Lambton, *Theory & Practice in Medieval Persian Government*; D.S. Richard, *Islamic Civilization;* A.J. Arberry, *op.cit*, Vol.II, pp. 21-23.
3) Islam came into existence to ensure social justice to the poor and the downtrodden. The Prophet of Islam was so deeply concerned with the economically deprived section of the society that he fought relentlessly against the forces not favourably disposed towards the poor. He had unflinching faith in *falah*, or social justice. He was an ardent believer of economic equality; a revolutionary and a great friend of the poor. "He stood for all humanity, orphanborn and poor; he envied not the rich...'Glorious *Quran*, Vol.I, p.325.
4) For Islamic State see Abdul Ahad, *Islam in Kashmir, Islam in the Modern World*, pp.210-211.
5) *Ibid.*
6) *Ibid.*
7) *Ibid.*
8) Ira.M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Socities*, pp.156-159, 179-182, 189-190, 210.
9) For *Khalafat* see *ibid*, pp.632, 634-635, 637-638.
10) For *Sufism* see H.A.R. Gibb, *op.cit*, p.20. The basic doctrine of *Sufism* is implicit in the Divine Name *al-haqq* (truth reality). *Sufis* accepted the doctrine *of Wahdat-al-Wujud* which means that there is no absolute reality or truth but God. According to Mortin Lings no other Muslim except the *Sufis* has pushed the doctrine of one God to its full conclusion. See *Religion in the Middle East*. p. 255.
11) Vide M. Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims*, pp.113-114.
12) *Sufism* encompassed piety and ethical behaviour and taught that the true Islam is the submission of man's will to God's will. The love of God is, according to *Sufis*, wedded to a profound *Sufi* determination to fuse personal religious experience with the practice of Islam. The *Sufis* cultivated psychological, emotional and spiritual awareness which influenced and inspired the rulers also.The *Shia's* too accepted *Sufism* as their divinely graced *Imam* became the

example and teacher of a mystical reunion with God. See Ira.M. Lapidus, *loc.cit*, p.95.

13) *Ibid.*

14) Islam had begun to influence Kashmir much before 1320 A.D. There are numerous evidences which clearly show that the Muslims had started coming to Kashmir as early as the 8th century A.D. Besides Hameem, who is said to have been the first Arab visitor to the Valley, there were others like Abu Dilf Misri-bin Mihlal al-Yandui who appears to have introduced the Muslim mode of dress and use of some Arabic and Persian phrases in Kashmir. According to Kalhana, King Vajraditya (725 A.D.) "sold many men to *Mleechas* and introduced into the country practices which befitted the *Mleechas*". *Rajatarangini* (Stein), b,iv, 397.

15) King Harsa (1089-1101 A.D.) introduced Muslim fashions of dress and luxury and recruited *Mleechas* in his army. R.K. Parmu, *History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, p.428. In the writings of Ksemendra we come across words like *dabir, Sultan, ganj, Shah, silah* which have Arabic and Persian origin.

16) It appears from the account of Marco Polo that by the end of the 13th century there was already a colony of Muslims in Srinagar. *Marco Polo* (Yule), Vol.I, pp.176-177.

17) "....The great pillars of Islam—unity of God, equality between man and man, and man and woman, and rejection of idolatry—had seized the great heart of the socially and culturally impoverished masses". R.K. Parmu, *loc.cit*, p.428.

18) For Rinchina see R.K. Parmu, *ibid*, pp.77-81. For Shah Mir see *ibid.*

19) *Ibid*, Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* (R.S. Pandt) p.123; *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, ff. 66-76.

20) See R.K. Parmu, *loc.cit*, pp.81-82.

21) For Shah Mir see *ibid*; Shah Mir played an important role in Kashmir history at a critical juncture when an intruder, Achala invaded the Valley. He played a hero's role and organized a strong resistance against the invader with the help of Kota Rani. In the words of Jonaraja: "Strange that this believer in *Allah* became the saviour of the people. As a dried up river allows men to cross it and gives them shelter on its banks, even so this believer in *Allah*, calm and active, protected the terrified subjects." Jonaraja, *Rajatarangini* (Dutt), p.26.

22) For Kota Rani see *ibid*, pp. 28-31; Srikanth Kaul, *Jonaraja's Rajatarangini,* p.85; R.K. Parmu, *op.cit,* p.85; Mohibul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*; p.44.

23) For details see *ibid.*

24) See R.K. Parmu, *loc.cit*, pp.101-107.
25) For details see Abdul Ahad, *Impact of Sayyid Ali Hamadani on Medieval Kashmir, (Shah-E-Hamadan)*, Muzaffarabad 1988, pp.160-166.
26) See Abdul Ahad, *Muslim Karkhanas of Medieval Kashmir*, (Islam & the Modern Age), August, 1983, pp.214-228
27) See *Impact of Sayyid Ali Hamadani on Medieval Kashmir*, n. 25.

THE FLOWERING OF SULTANATE

8

> The establishment of a stable government in 1320 A.D., created conditions conducive to peace and prosperity, giving rise to a new socio-economic order. Amidst peace, the capital Srinagar.... became the hub of social, political and commercial activities, luring a large number of the Central Asian Muslims to settle down in Kashmir. These Muslims..... inspired sultans to introduce modes of life befitting the Muslim court and society....
>
> —Dr. Ahad.

The spread of Islam and the formation of the Sultanate in Kashmir was followed by the consolidation of its political, economic and administrative structure through a Centralised Government comprising the new political elite who took control of administration of the country and its outlying areas in a hierarchical manner.[1] The protection guaranteed to the Central Asian *Sufis*, traders and craftsmen, and the patronage extended to commerce and industry motivated more migration of people from Central Asia who settled in the Valley and married into local families and, eventually, assimilated into indigenous culture and social groups; developing a Central Asian— Kashmirian culture in language, art and architecture.[2] The influence of this give and take was manifest in court procedures, social etiquette, behaviour, protocol, court language (Persian), medical, mathematical and scientific ideas which also espoused a social stratification of the society into groups in which each person had a fixed place with certain rights and duties.[3]

The gradual cementation of Sultanate encouraged further institutionalization of Muslim practices and made *Sufi* brotherhoods and retreats focus of attention. The use and maintenance of weapons, know – how of governance, irrigation and agricultural management, revenue and finance not only stabilized the Sultanate but also encouraged it to launch campaigns and expeditions. Sultan Shihab-ud-Din (1355-73 A.D.) is said to have occupied Ohind and sacked Peshawar but the snowy barrier of Hindu Kush forced him to retreat.

His successor Sultan Qutub-ud-Din (1373-89 A.D.) had more varied role in strengthening the infant Kashmir Sultanate. He was practical enough to implement the political ideas of Central Asian Government and, thus, proved a worthy administrator and a generous and a Just ruler: Firishta writes:[4]

> This prince was remarkable for his attention to public business, which he transacted in person and generally with justice and moderation.

The legacy left by the Sultan became an integral part of the Muslim culture of Kashmir under Sultan Sikandar (1389-1413 A.D.). He invaded North-West India and married the daughter of Feroz, the chief of Ohind and entered into matrimonial alliance with Sindh as well; obtaining the marriage of his daughter with its ruler.[5] But the dignity of the Sultanate came to be diluted by the short-sightedness and selfishness of Suhabhatta, a neo-Muslim[6] who embarked on a fierce campaign to uproot Hinduism from Kashmir. The anti-Hindu tirade and the policy of religious persecution received stimulus when Suhabhatta seized the wealth of Hindu temples to meet the demand of Timur put forth by his envoy.[7] The situation did not change during the reign of Sultan Ali Shah (1413-20 A.D.); he was too young to side line the powerful Prime Minister who continued playing silly games which, eventually, fomented ill feeling and public resentment against the Sultanate. Shahi Khan, younger brother of Sultan Ali Shah, whose vision had developed under the tiresome circumstances prevailing in the Valley, came forward to articulate the public resentment and lead the revolt against the Sultanate. Ali Shah was defeated and Shahi Khan ascended the throne in 1420 A.D., taking the name Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin[8], and ushered in a feeling that postulated a cure for the ailment afflicting the Sultanate, and for the restoration of its health on sound lines.[9]

Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin's accession to the throne aroused the public support for his efforts directed towards redeeming the awfulness of the Sultanate. He exhibited tremendous maturity and foresight and did not fall prey to the beaurucratic machinations and elitist politics right from day one. He displayed considerable awareness, astuteness and a marked sense of statecraft even when he was in his teens. His bold denial of religious intolerance which had reduced the new faith to an ethical dilemma and desperation through the villains of humanity; his perception of Islamic justice and rational theology; his concern and generosity towards the people irrespective of their religious affliations; his righteous thoughts for those less fortunate; his thorough actions to accelerate prosperity, stability and integration; and his diplomacy, expansion of kingdom through conquest, reforms and reconstruction, and rehabilitation of the Hindus who had fled the Valley, made Kashmir symbolic of a real Paradise on earth. For these measures, the Sultan became widely popular as ***Bud Shah***, the Great King.[10]

That he was great enough appeared in all clarity when he:[11]

1. put reasonable limits on the political -religious elite's activities of proselytization;
2. extended patronage to art and music;
3. embellished the decorum and dignity of the Kashmir Sultanate by extending its paramountcy over all of western Tibet;
4. dispensed justice without any partiality, forgiving not even his son or minister or a friend if he were guilty (as stated by Jonaraja);
5. supplemented logistic support to his policy of equality by making merit the sole criteria for employment;
6. built canals,bridges,floating gardens, and *Khankahas*, *madrasas* and *masjids*;
7. augumented *Karkhana* system by reviving traditional crafts and by introducing new ones; and

8. began correlating culture and unity; emphasising unity of people on the basis of common morality, however, scattered and divided they were.

These were some of the unprecedented rapid bursts, of the new Sultanate headed by Bud Shah, which resulted in arranging, commendably, scattered pell-mell into an orderly community of people and invigorating them to oppose tooth and nail the regimentation of society, and even encouraging them to adopt un-Islamic life-style. The author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* writes:[12]

> .... even the *ulamas*, the learned, the *Sayyids* and *qazees* of this land [eventually] began to observe them [un-Islamic customs] without exihibiting even the slightest repugnance for them. There was non to forbid them to do so.

The realization of *Bud Shah's* gigantic mission largely depended upon the emotional and intellectual support of the people and an appropriate ideological frame which became available through strengthening the educational system and a network of schools and institutions; a real investment in Kashmir's future; where a large number of academicians, poets and musicians flocked together to shape the intellectual capabilities and aesthetic standards of the people.[13] As a consequence, *Bud Shah* became the intellectual and ideological icon of the people of Kashmir and the harbinger of a change and the forerunner of a mass literacy programme which transformed almost every Kashmiri into an intelligent creative being. Eventually, learning flourished so amazingly that Srivara, the historian, witnessed:[14]

> Even women, cooks and porters becoming poets........

The great king ultimately evolved into a greatest Kashmiri; an achievement without parallel both in the past and present times; by cultivating, as Jonaraja writes:[15]

> Courage and will to perform what was beyond the power of past kings, and what may be beyond the ability of future rulers.

Bud Shah was himself a fountainhead of knowledge, scholarship and wisdom; he was determined to spare no effort to eradicate ignorance and educate his people at all costs. Srivara writes:[16]

> If the king be a sea of learning and partial to merit, the people too become so...
> He built extensive lodging houses for students and voices studying logic and grammar arose from these dwellings. The king helped the students by providing teachers, books, houses, food and money.
> He extended the limits of learning in all branches.

The Sultan also sponsored religious and scholarly debates, literary seminars, philosophical discourses and research programmes, and encouraged translation of

Sanskrit works into Persian, and promoted the compilation of biographies in the Kashmiri language; paving the way for the Kashmiri - Persian - Sanskrit literary movement to enjoy a renaissance.[17] A strong impetus was given to this movement when *Bud Shah* himself composed two works in Persian; the manufacture of fireworks and *Shikayat* (a treatise on the plaint) and began his intellectual sojourn by undertaking a serious study of the Hindu transcendental philosophy and Sanskrit literature.[18]

Such a rich intellectual background helped, in all likelihood, the noble-hearted philosopher-king to find the glimmerings of solution to various problems confronting the Sultanate. Widespread menace of theft was one among them. And to eradicate it the king developed a novel plan by making the villages/towns/cities responsible among whom the travellers sojourned when they were robbed.[19] Similarly, he devised a prison reform policy which resulted in creating productive resources for the maintenance of prisoners within the jail. Holding the prisoners behind bars without any work and letting them remain absorbed in idle gossip, on the expenses of Sultanate, would make them more devilish to the determinant of society, rather than reform them, postulated the king. Therefore, he introduced prison industries to reform the criminals by engaging them in occupations like pottery, and by making them to work as labourers on public works.[20] Likewise, he evolved a pragmatic solution to check the problem of profiteering and price fluctuations; the major bane of the Valley due to its communicational limitations; by issuing monthly notifications of the prices of commodities regulated by the Sultanate.[21]

Thus, he bequeathed to the posterity what best he could envisage for his own generation over whom, as his contemporary says: he 'watched with care as the husbandman watches over his crops, supplying water or keeping the field dry as may seem suitable'; and carved out a memorable name for himself which still lives in generation memory after a lapse of so many centuries. Even today we come across the Kashmiri labourers who raise loud shouts: *Bud Shah Pad Shah* at the pitch of their breath to mark with rhythm the beat of their labours to ease the pain of their strained muscles, and the scream, thus, produced in the process rejuvenates them to pull and push the heavy loads with great ease. Not only this, his name is still remembered in the tales told by grandmothers plaiting the hair of their young grand-daughters and damsels on the eve of their weddings. Zain-ul-Abidin could have hardly anticipated that his fifty years of reign would leave such an indelible imprint on public memory; and his death would send shock waves throughout the country, shaking people not to cook their food and remain dumb with grief on the day he went to "Heaven" in 1470 A.D. Srivara writes:

> No one cooked food on the day; no smoke arose from the houses; all were dumb with grief. They lamented and said the king was the greatest among all sovereigns.

Opening of Popular Minds

Flowering of the Sultanate was not possible without the help and guidance of popular and venerable minds of the time whose wisdom gave a joy forever, and provided food to the movement of rational theology the application of which was necessitated by the acrimonious atmosphere created by the individual seeking of Suhabhatta and his remorseless cruelty against his former co-religionists. In the vain hope of persuading these minds to shut all thoughts of humanism out of their intense gaze and gear, this villain had not even hesitated to imprison Sheikh Noor-un-Din (*Nund Rishi*), the most renowned people's priest of the time and the founder of *Rishi* order whose philosophy was weaned at the breast of Lal Ded, the venerable priestess of her times.[22]

When divorced from the actual needs of society, philosophy becomes abstract and meaningless, as does the politics become an absolute bedlam when separated from rationalism and philosophy. Knowing this well these people's priests and Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin augmented the pursuits of each other, making the best times possible under their collective wisdom which the time has preserved as essential components of the Kashmiri personality even against hopeless odds. The history of Kashmiri mind and personality; of its heart and sentiments; of its attitudes and perceptions is a remarkable production of a direct correlation between rational theology and culture, unity and morality, politics and philosophy, *Sufism* and indigenous ethos, and conviction and demonstration envisioned by these apostles of social harmony, integration and peace.[23] It lies in Kashmiri proverbs and idioms on which Lal Ded's *vtakyas* (sayings)[24] and Nund *Rishi's* teachings have a direct bearing. It is also seen in the songs of the priestess and the *Noornama* of the priest. The priestess unlocked the secrets of universal reality when she sang:

> *Shiva* lives everywhere; do not divide Hindu from Muslim. Use your sense to recognize yourself; that is the true way to find God.

Similarly, the *Rishi* peer exposed the hypocrisy of the *mullah* when he said:

> Your rosary is like a snake; you bend it only on seeing your disciples. You have eaten six plates of food, one after the other; if you are the priest, then who are robbers?

In another verse he says:

> During this iron age, I found liars prospering. And in the house of the pious I found grief born of poverty.

These sayings were the basics of the rational theology propounded by the popular minds, not to impair the growth of the new faith but to purge the public mind of the unhappy memories of Suhabhatta's intolerance. This theology did not operate in vacuum; it was intrinsic to Islam and acted as a great stimulant to bridge the gap between normative and ritualistic Islam, between scriptual and non-scriptual Islam, and between progressive and retrogressive Islam. It clearly defined both the normative form of beliefs of the new faith, its practice and its rituals, and endeavoured to retrieve it from all extraneous details which had in the course of its propagation made it problematic and an issue of debate between two formidable sects of Islam (the *Sunnis* and the *Shias*), besides limiting its worth as a great force of social change. Thus, it was a movement directed towards the achievement of the crystallization of an Islamic way of life and bringing about reconciliation between the *Sunnis* and *the Shias*, and the Muslims and the Hindus; a movement whose purpose was to expose the shallow and superficial knowledge of *the mullahs* about Islam and challenge their class domination through the promotion of sectarian and religious conflicts and enmities; a movement which encouraged the people to change their position not through anarchy but through changing their attitudes and practices; and a movement of everlasting love and devotion.

This astounding spiritual renaissance made Kashmir extraordinarily beautiful and effective and far more luminous than its mountains, lakes and springs; a real Paradise on earth; and ensured gradual flowering of its Sultanate.

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) Kashmir did not develop its political structure on the basis of the fundamentals of the Islamic State evolved by the Prophet. It cultivated a political system that was in keeping with the traditions of agrarian culture. A powerful and a centralized Sultanate comprising courtiers,nobles, *diwans, jagirdars, muftis, qazees* etc; was objectively needed for carrying on the administration smoothly and for providing an organized system of irrigation, finance and law. This political system was comparable to that of Central Asia which rose up inconsequence of the fusion of Persian and Arab Islamic civilizations. For details see, Abdul Ahad, *Islam in Kashmir*, *op.cit*, pp.214-215; Mohibul Hassan, *op.cit*, pp.197-199, 200-204, 207-208; Jonaraja, *op.cit*, p.96.

2) The influence of Central Asia is clearly manifest in art, language and architecture of Kashmir. 'If one were to trace the growth and rapid development of the literature in Kashmir, one would find that its history during the Muslim, Mughal, Afghan and Sikh periods has essentially been the history of Persian literature'. Kaumudi, *Kashmir —Its Cultural Heritage*, p.49. Calligraphy also came to be cultivated during the Sultanate period but only in its *naskh* and *nastaliq* forms; the rest of its six different styles did not develop in Kashmir. The Muslim architecture of Kashmir is freely adorned with the art of calligraphy. The Central Asian music too became popular with *santoor, rabab, saz, sitar* (the musical instruments) and *Sufiana kalam*, the mystical poetry. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin and Sultan Haidar Shah were the great patrons of music. See Srivara, *Jaina-Rajatarangini*, (Dutt), pp.231-234. For details see G.M.D. Sufi, *Kashir*, Vol.II, pp. 546-554. The architecture also imbibed the Central Asian influence. This resulted in the replacement of indeginous stone architecture by wooden architecture. 'Muslim architecture in Kashmir must be pronounced as rather disappointed in comparison with the grand edifices of Hindu rule like the temples at Martand, Avantipur, *Parihasapura*, Pattan, Tapar etc.,' *ibid*, p. 505. For details see Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture*, pp. 80-83.

3) The social stratification of the society was at its peak during the Sultanate period. *Sayyids, qazees, muftis, ulamas*, merchants constituted the nobility whereas the masses comprised the labourers, shawl weavers, peasants, butchers and other sections engaged in menial jobs. For details see Mohibul Hassan, *op.cit*, pp. 221-225.

4) *Ibid*, p.33. Frishta vide Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan History and culture of Indian People.
5) Jonaraja, *op.cit*, p. 60.
6) *Ibid.*
7) For more details regarding Suhabhatta's anti-Hindu policies, see *Of Pride & Prejudice*, next chapter. For Ali Shah's religious bent of mind see R.K. Parmu, *op.cit*, p.132; Mohibul Hassan, *op.cit*, p 68; Srikanth Kaul, *op.cit*, p. 102 and notes.
8) 'Preliminary to all other measures, he [Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin] recalled the Brahmans who had been expelled, and caused a general toleration of all religions to be publically notified'. Frishta, vide Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol.VI, p. 3812.
9) For a detailed study of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin see Jonaraja, *op.cit*, pp. 77-80, 85-86; Srivara, *op.cit*, pp. 102-104, 118-128; 131-137; 140-145; 162-172; R.K. Parmu, *loc.cit*, pp. 138-149; 154-163; 168-169; 172-173; Mohibul Hassan , *op.cit*, pp. 72-73; 82-91; G.M.D. Sufi, *op.cit*, Vol.I, pp. 157-158; 170-176
10) For Zain-ul-Abidin's contributions see *ibid*. For his augumentation of *Karkhana* system see Abdul Ahad, *Muslim Karkhanas of Medieval Kashmir, op.cit*, pp. 214-224 & notes; *Kashmir to Frankfurt.*
11) *Baharistan-i-Shahi* (tr.K.N. Pandita), p. 74.
12) *Ibid*
13) 'There was not a branch of learning or arts or literature or fine arts which were not studied there'. Srivara, *op.cit*, p. 145. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin showed considerable respect for men of learning. Many learned men flocked to his court from foreign lands and settled here. *Baharistan-i-Shahi* (tr.K.N. Pandita), p. 65.
14) Srivara,*op.cit*, pp.144-145.
15) Jonaraja, *op.cit*, p. 78.
16) Srivara, *loc.cit.*
17) As a result of this movement Jonaraja wrote *Rajatarangini* in Sanskrit which was continued by Srivara. Nothosoma Pandit wrote *Zaina Charit* in Kashmiri; Yodha Bhatta compiled *Zaina Prakasa*. Mulla Ahmad translated the *Mahabharata* and *Dasavatar* into Persian. Srivara rendered *Yusuf-u-Zulaikha* into Sanskrit. See *Tarikh-i-Hassan*, Vol.II (Research & Publication Department), pp. 195-197; R.C. Kak, *op.cit*, pp. 35-36.
18) *Cf.* R.K. Parmu, *op.cit*, p. 169 & n. 152.
19) *Cf.* R.C. Kak, *op.cit*, p. 35.
20) *Ibid*, pp. 34-35.
21) *Ibid.*

22) Sheikh Noor-ud-Din and Lal Ded represent the real Kashmiri ethos and mind. Their philosophies synthesised to illuminate the minds and hearts of the people of Kashmir and their sayings are still repeated to seek mental comfort. Sheikh's shrine at *Charari Sharief* is visited each day by thousands of Kashmiris to evoke the blessings of God.

23) These popular minds blended perfectly with the religious and cultural landscape of the medieval Kashmir. Their lifestyle of self-abnegation, simplicity and rejection of the material world struck an immediate chord in the hearts of the people.

24) Lal Ded recognized the essential oneness of all religions. According to her, love and sincerity are the core of religion and these are the monopoly of no one religion. Criticising idolatory, she said:

> Idol is of stone, temple is of stone; above (temple) and below (idol) are one; which of them will thou worship o foolish Pandit? Cause thou the union of mind and soul.

OF PRIDE & PREJUDICE

9

(*Sam*)... (85) (?) *Sri Sikandara Saha Reoye Sangapati Rahula Kastvehkena Tutha.....*

(Inscription on a sculptural slab at Ganapatyar temple, Srinagar.)

The first and foremost among the wonders of Kashmir stand the idol temples.
—Mirza Haider

The foregoing account makes it abundantly apparent that conversions to Islam were not by force but by peaceful means. A major portion of these were voluntary, made out of true belief. A few of these were for opportunistic political and social considerations and by calculation of economic gains. In some cases both the worldly and religious motives united together to attract conversions under the auspices of *Sufis* rather than the learned *ulamas*. These *Sufis* emphasized the importance of the *mamalat*[1] ingredients of Islam which gave a social meaning to their mission. They were most emphatic that the people, especially the youth, cultivated essential social and humanistic qualities to become paragons of virtue and real instruments of change. They were taught that they should :[2]

1. feel perturbed over the sufferings of people;
2. forebear all their sufferings with grace;

3. remain thankful during abundance;
4. be patient with the will of God;
5. remain aloof from evil;
6. face enemies of the people;
7. seek knowledge;
8. remain careful about their thoughts and actions;
9. be partisan's of truth;
10. be respectful towards elders;
11. be affectionate towards minors; and
12. be courteous towards learned.

By inculcating young men with these qualities, the *Sufis* accentuated the new socio-religious consciousness, enabling the youth to transcend the transcendental limits to become potent propellers of change that, eventually, came subtly to influence the society.[3]

However, the most outstanding feature of the contributions of these *Sufis* was their active participation in the economic transformation of Kashmir which they accomplished through the introduction of various skills, occupations, trades and professions in vogue in Central Asia and required to sustain the grandeur of newly established Sultanate.[4] Thus, to reinforce the material prosperity of the society, they made tremendous efforts to recreate in the Valley what was available in their native places in terms of economic institutions; the most important being the *Karkhana*(factory) system, architecture and arts and crafts of Central Asia.[5]

Based on the principles of social division of labour and production relations compatible with the requirements of urbanization, which was intensified by the influx of Central Asian modes of life, these *Karkhanas* employed skilled labour and imparted training, as well, in various trades to young men.[6]

The distribution of goods produced in the *Karkhanas* necessitated improvements in the marketing system which, eventually, gave impetus to trade and commerce. The elaboration of *bazzars* (markets) was an indicator of a change based on the availability of commodity economy and social surplus, and a complex division of labour. Thus, increase in the volume of trade through commodity economy and a well organized marketing system resulted not only in an exemplary material prosperity of the society but also in considerable activity which in course of time attracted the attention of foreign customers to Kashmir products.[7]

Equally great was the impact of Muslim architecture, introduced through the establishment of *Khankahas* (religious retreats), *masjids* (mosques), *dargahas* (shrines), *dar-al-uloom*, *madrasas, maktabs* (schools), *yateem khanas* (orphanages), hospices and tombs which further brightened the prospects of employment and apprenticeship for the youth. Highly skilled artisans and profoundly proficient masons of Central Asian origin, namely Sayyid Muhamad Nooristani and Ustad Khawaja Saddr-ud-Din Kharasani, took great pains to teach delicacies of the art of masonry to budding Kashmiris in the course of construction of *Jama Masjid*, the foremost of its kind, during the reign of Sultan Sikandar.[8]

Moreover, the *Sufi* Central Asian heritage supplemented Kashmir's rural economy by inspiring the Sultanate to overhaul agriculture, irrigation, revenue and taxation which had been thrown into complete disarray due to political disorder and technological limitations of the period. Thus, the rural economy was totally reorganized by undertaking reforms and rationalizing taxes which were so heavy as not to allow the average Kashmiris to afford even an essential commodity like salt.[9]

The effect of these changes was to destroy the old order of society in order to pave way for Islam to win widespread popularity on substantial and profound and permanent basis in the Valley. And when the Kashmiris realized these benefits directly affecting their life they accepted it as their faith.

The *Sufis*, however, could not generate an encouraging public response to Islamic forms of worship, to *Hadith* and *Sheriat*; these remained on the back burner due to deeply entrenched habits and ethos of the Kashmiris.[10] The taste acquired on account of widespread urbanization and royal demeanour of the Sultanate prompted the new political elite to acquiesce in a profligate lifestyle, lavish spending, elegant dress and youthful exuberance which also did not allow *Sufis* to make any remarkable headway in galvanizing the Sultans into a socio-religious activity that was in keeping with the tenets of the Quran.

The new faith was, however, determined to generate a unified culture, a coherent way of life, and the permanence of Muslim rule in Kashmir. Islam, therefore, adopted a flexible attitude to achieve these objectives. It agreed to loosen its belt to coexist with certain un-Islamic practices. *Jazia*, cremation tax, etc; were not, thus, imposed.[11] Cow slaughter was not encouraged.[12] Similarly *sati*, the inhuman Hindu custom, continued.[13] Official patronage was extended to Sanskrit.[14] One of the grandees of the Sultanate, Sultan Qutb-ud-Din (1374 - 89 A.D.) even went to the extent of showing marked propensity for a conduct inimical to the new faith; he married simultaneously two wives who were real sisters.[15] His predecessor Sultan Shihab-ud-Din (1355 - 77 A.D.) refused to melt the metal images of Hindu gods for converting them into coins when his Hindu minister, Udayashri advised him to do so to overcome his financial difficulties.[16] He, instead, installed eighteen lined stone inscription in *Sharda* script which contains an invocation of the Sultan to lord Haramba (*Ganesha*), and constructed *dharmamatha* (religious hospice), and repaired dilapidated temples of antiquity.[17]

Not adapting firmly to the new faith, the Muslim elite, thus, extended encouragement to un-Islamic practices. The author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* writes:[18]

> ... The customs of the Hindus and the infidels and their corrupt and immoral practices attained..... popularity that it resulted in a gradual weakening of Islam and a decay in its cannons and postulates; idol - worship and corrupt and immoral practices thrived.

This state of affair caused enormous anxiety to a galaxy of *Sufis*, especially Sayyid Ali Hamadani, popularly known as Hazrat Amir-i-Kabir. He did everything whatever was possible to inspire the Sultanate to remodel itself on the lines of a theocratic State. Besides numerous works, he wrote *Zakhirat-ul-Muluk* to implore the Sultans to refrain from:[19]

1. *Kufur* and *shirk*;
2. unethical and idolatrous usages;
3. repairing Hindu temples; and
4. adopting non-Muslim mode of dress and lifestyle.

There is no denying that the code of conduct envisaged by Sayyid Ali Hamadani influenced Sultan Qutb-ud-Din to nullify his un-Islamic marriage and introduce some light changes in the style of dress.[20] But on the whole the major portion of Sultanate remained unaffected by it owing to the prevalence of agrarian culture. Even Sultan Sikandar, a puritan and orthodox Muslim, could not afford to go against certain traditions antoganistic to Islamic culture and beliefs.

Malice—Prepense

Sultan Sikandar's (1389-1413 A.D.) role as a Muslim ruler of Kashmir is generally described as a symbol of Islamic orthodoxy and rigidity of practices promoted by Sayyid Ali Hamadani. It has been magnified as a watershed of iconoclasm and religious persecution, and as a climax of forcible conversions through sword which resulted in the mass exodus of Pandits to safer places. The formulation of such judgements is a product of deliberate malice and an act of prejudice having no historical footing.

Sultan's commitment to Islamic way of life, and his endeavours for personal realization of moral and spiritual qualities, and his adherence to Quran, *Hadith* and *Sheria* have been taken to imply a totally apathetic and callous disregard for the people not subscribing to his faith. Similarly Sultan's warm and rousing reception to a large number of *Sufis* —whose unabated influx into the Valley inconsequence of their persecution by Timur[21] and whose subsequent proximity to the Sultanate were not to the liking of many—has enmeshed him in a fierce controversy to invigorate the trend of portraying him as an iconoclast and idol-breaker set by both local Islamicists and parochial historians.

The expansion of Islam in Kashmir involved, as we have seen, different forces which did not necessarily signify uprooting of old traditions and attitudes. It spread in the Valley largely due to its assurances of political and economic benefits and of a sophisticated culture which the people of Kashmir were eagerly yearning for. The acceptance of new faith was, therefore, a smooth and spontaneous mass reaction, not entailing any force or choice of conversion or death. Also the change of political regime, which set in motion the impressive era of Sultanate, did not involve any bloodshed, conquest or subjugation by an alien army, or any dichotomy between a native and an outsider, and the conqueror and the conquered. There was no reason, thus, available to the Sultans, including Sultan Sikandar, for use of force to effect conversions. And if any untoward happened it was due to a few neo-Muslims who were determined to settle a score with their old rivals. The most conspicuous among them was Suhabhatta, the Commander-in-chief and Prime

Minister of Sultan Sikandar who after his conversion harassed his former co-religionists, mainly for social and political reasons.[22] Assuming the name of Malik Saif-ud-Din,[23] he showed considerable disrespect for Hindu gods, shrines and traditions, and in the words of Jonaraja:[24]

> There was no city or town, no village or forest, where an abode of the gods escaped destruction by Suhabhatta. All the images of the gods were broken (with no more consideration than if) they had been mere stones, but no misfortune was seen (to befall) the perpetrators (of the deed) as (had always been the case) of yore.

Suhabhatta was so bigoted that he forbade the Hindus to put *tilak* on their foreheads.He demolished their temples, and imposed *jazia* with the desire to dominate rather than convert them; to enhance his newly acquired social respectability, identity and prestige; and to make himself acceptable to the Muslim nobility in terms of matrimonial alliances.[25] And he succeeded pandering to his unethical practices and malice against his own class on account of nonchalant attitude of Sultan Sikandar who, as a child of tender years then, could not comprehend all the niceties of politics of those times. Jonaraja, a contemporary chronicler, unequivocally states that the Sultan did not personally contribute to these unpleasant happenings, and rightly comments:[26]

> If the subordinates go amuck, the blame comes to the master.

Thus, it was the error of youth which constricted the Sultan's faculties to prevent unabashed and unbridled hatred and malice of his Prime Minister towards the Hindus, and which, eventually, allowed it to become emblematic of his reign. But the Sultan set on rectifying the errors, committed by his officials to tarnish his image, as soon as he came out of his impressionable young age and tutelage of religious zealots to take independent decisions relating the matters of the Sultanate. This contention is amply supported by an archaeological find, which we have come across in a sculptural slab at Ganpatyar temple, Srinagar, bearing the following inscription:

> *(Sam) ...... (85) (?) Sri Sikandara Saha Reoye Sangapati Rahulya Kastvehkena Tatha ......*

which means:

> *Sikandara Saha* is the Sultan Sikandar. Year 85 refers to the *Laukika* era commonly in use in Kashmir and corresponds to 1409 A.D., when the Sultan was on the throne. *Sangapati* denotes a person who led a group of pilgrims to some sacred shrine. The image was consecrated by *Kastvakena* son of Rahul, a Buddhist.

Quite contrary to what this archaeological evidence elucidates, almost all the Persian writers have emphasised that Sultan Sikandar was a great iconoclast. They have left no stone unturned to eulogize him as a gigantic '***Butshikan***', idol-breaker who was resolved (as described by them) to ensure a complete exodus of the non-Muslims from Kashmir. What underlies these assumptions of medieval chroniclers is difficult to perceive. However, it appears that they have resorted to such descriptions for religious and communal considerations; to earn religious merit on the one hand, and to propagandize iconoclastic trend on the other. The author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* writes:[27]

> Sultan Sikandar and Malik Saifu-ud-Din, God bless them both, joined hands to gear their full effort towards the eradication of infidelity and other aberrant practices. They raised the banner of Islam and the standard of the faith of the chosen among people to the highest pinnacle of glory and exaltation. Through the blessings and support of Islam and by the propagation of the commands of the *Sheria*, they were rewarded with victories wherever they led their armies, confirming the saying that 'God helps those who help Muhammad's religion'.

But the later writers, especially Mirza Haider Dughlat, Emperor Jehangir[28] and some European travellers, not following the motivated diction of earlier narrators, have given a dispassionate account of the state of affairs in respect of the status of idols and temples established in the Valley prior to the advent of Islam. They were profoundly impressed by their beauty, grandeur and architectural style when they visited the Valley and found them scattered in hundreds. If Sultan Sikandar had demolished all Hindu temples then who raised those magnificent temples which impressed Mirza Haider to observe:[29]

> First and foremost among the wonders of Kashmir stand her idol temples. In and around Kashmir there are more than 150 temples ….. In the rest of the world there is not to be seen, or heard of, one building like this. How wonderful that there should (here) be a hundred and fifty of them.

The loftiness of these temples was intact even at the time when G.T.Vigne wrote about them as late as 1842 A.D.[30] They had withstood even the extremes of temperature, tremors and times. The existence of these temples in hundreds was pragmatically proportionate to the size of population of the Hindus at that point of time.

Likewise, the myth of seven families, who endured ruthless persecution for their religious beliefs for a long time in the Valley, is a figment of imagination of religious fanatics which can be objectively exploded by the statistical data, furnished by the author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, that shows that there lived more than twelve hundred Hindu families as comfortably as those of the Muslims.[31]

Another episode which delivers a firm rebuttal of the accusations that Sultan Sikandar was anti-Hindu was his unhesitating encouragement to intercommunal marriages; a practice that, eventually, struck its roots so deeply that even a liberal and romantic Emperor, Jehangir was astonished to state:

> Kashmiri Muslims ally themselves with the Hindus and both give and take girls. Taking them is good, but giving them God forbid.

While witnessing the Kashmiri Muslims adopting a life style that was totally undifferentiated from those of the Hindus, Emperor Aurangzeb passed condemnatory remarks and dubbed them as *bepir* (vicious) and *be-tamiz* (lacking discretion).[32]

Sultan Sikandar was favourably disposed towards his Hindu spouse, Shoba Devi. She too yielded considerable influence over the Sultan.[33] But she seems to have been not able to prevail upon the fanatic Suhabhatta to abandon his fanaticism, especially after her husband's death in 1413 A.D., which provided him an opportunity to be in the lime light as the Prime Minister of Sultan Ali Shah (1413-20 A.D.) Although the eldest son of Sultan Sikandar, Ali Shah was minor with no political acumen at the time of his accession to the throne. Like his father, Ali Shah's tender age threw him at the mercy of his Prime Minister, giving rise to a fluid political situation that emboldened Suhabhatta to do whatever he liked and enabled him to pursue his personal vendetta against the Hindus. Thus, the short spell of dizzying pace of events so rekindled malevolent Prime Minister's rancour, hatred and impiety against the Hindu gods, goddesses and temples that their followers were once again landed in great trouble. They were subjected to vigorous persecution, and the Muslims who raised their voice against this policy were publically humiliated. Even a great *Rishi*, Sheikh Noor-ud-Din (*Nund Rishi*) was not spared; he was imprisoned for his intervention on behalf of the Hindus. The celebration of Hindu ceremonies and traditional Kashmiri attire were always severely reprimanded. Such circumstances seem to have compelled a reasonable number of Hindus to flee the Valley in search of a better life and safety from persecution. In all likelihood the non-Muslims had to suffer terribly till the death removed Suhabhatta from the scene.

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) For *mamalat* and its significance in Islam see Dr. Abdul Ahad, *Impact of Sayyid Ali Hamadani on Medieval Kashmir*, Institute of Kashmir Studies, Muzaffarabad, pp. 160-165.

2) In his treatise, *Fatutia*, Sayyid Ali Hamadani addresses the youth (*Datut*) to develop these qualities; generosity, kindliness, hospitality and forgiveness to become true Muslims. See Sayyid Ali Hamadani, *Risalan Fatutia*; Mohammad Riyaz, *Asrar-o-Ahwal Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani*, pp. 129, 318.

3) 'Real student [youth] must try to find his own moral values upon finding himself in miraculous influence and upon putting on his gown of awareness. A real student must walk firmly on the streets of religious rules without being satisfied with the outside resemblances.... [He] must clear his heart... [And] drink the wine of cleanliness... must use his sword of effort to kill the gaint of desire, must work very hard in order to reach to all the ranks ...' Advice of Amir-i-Kabir vide *Shah-E-Hamdan* Commemorative Vol. Muzaffarabad, pp.215-216.

4) Abdul Ahad (i) *Kashmir to Frankfurt*, pp. 10-12; (ii) *Muslim Karkhanas of Medieval Kashmir*, *op.cit*, pp. 214-224; (iii) *Impact of Sayyid Ali Hamadani*, pp. 162-164.

5) *Ibid.*

6) *Ibid.*

7) *Ibid.*

8) For architecture see G.M.D. Sufi, *op.cit*, pp. 505-521; Anand Kaul, *Archaeological Remains in Kashmir*, p. 22; Srivara, *op.cit*, pp. 139-147; Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture* (Islamic period), pp. 83-85, 116; Jonaraja, *op.cit*, pp. 87, 93-94; *Rajatarangini, op.cit,* Vol.II, p. 449.

9) Abdul Ahad, *Kashmir to Frankfurt*, p.53 & n105.

10) Abdul Ahad, *Islam in Kashmir, op.cit*, pp. 211-219.

11) *Jazia* came to be imposed for the first time in Kashmir in the reign of Sultan Sikandar. But it was soon abolished alongwith other taxes during the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin. See Jonaraja, ed. Srikanth Kaul, p. 97.

12) Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari* (Jarroti), Vol.II. p.388.

13) Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin revived *sati*, R.K. Parmu, *op.cit*, pp. 124, 173.

14) The Sultan extended patronage to Sanskrit. Jonaraja, Srivara and others produced a variety of books in this language. See *Tarikh Hassan*, Vol.II (Reasearch & Publication Department), pp. 195-197.

The Sultan himself acquired a thorough knowledge of Sanskrit and employed all his available time in the study of its sacred books. R.C. Kak, *op.cit*, p. 34.

15) Sultan Qutb-ud-Din had married two women who were uterine sisters. When Amir Sayyid Ali Hamadani came to know of it he forbade him to do so. The Sultan divorced one of his two wives of his free will; with the other he entered into a new marriage. *Baharistan-i-Shahi* (tr.K.N. Pandita), p. 35.

16) S.L. Shali, *op.cit*, pp. 215-216. But the author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* (ibid, p. 34) attributes to him the demolition of idols.

17) *Ibid.*

18) *Baharistan-i-Shahi* (tr.K.N. Pandita*)*, p. 74.

19) For the scholarly contributions of Amir-i-Kabir see:

Asrar-ul-Nuqtah
Abqat
Zakhirat-ul-Muluk
Risalab-Khawataria
Futuatia
Sharha-isma-ul-Hasna.

Among these works *Zakhirat-ul-Muluk* is conspicuous. It deals with the duties of a good ruler, the matrimonial rights, the duties of children towards their parents and good qualities of character. Besides, it advises people to face and confront sufferings and difficulties.

20) See note 15 above.

21) Timur was ruthless to those *Sayyids* only who refused to acknowledge his suzerainity.These *Sayyids* belonged to Hamadan and Subzwar (Baihaq). They fled for their safety and entered Kashmir in the 14th century A.D. See R.K. Parmu, *op.cit*, pp. 102-103. Also see Sharaf-ud-Din Yazdi, *Zafarnama*, Vol.I, pp. 109, 798.

22) 'Suhabhatta [after demolishing the temples] felt the satisfaction and with the help of the leader of the army [meaning the *Sayyids, ulamas* and the newly converted Kashmiris] tried to destroy the caste of the people… Subjected them [the Hindus] to heavy fine [*jiya*] ……'Jonaraja, *op.cit*, p. 60.

23) 'Amir Sayyid Muhammad conferred upon him the title of Malik Saif-ud-Din'. *Baharistan-i-Shahi (loc.cit.),* p. 38.

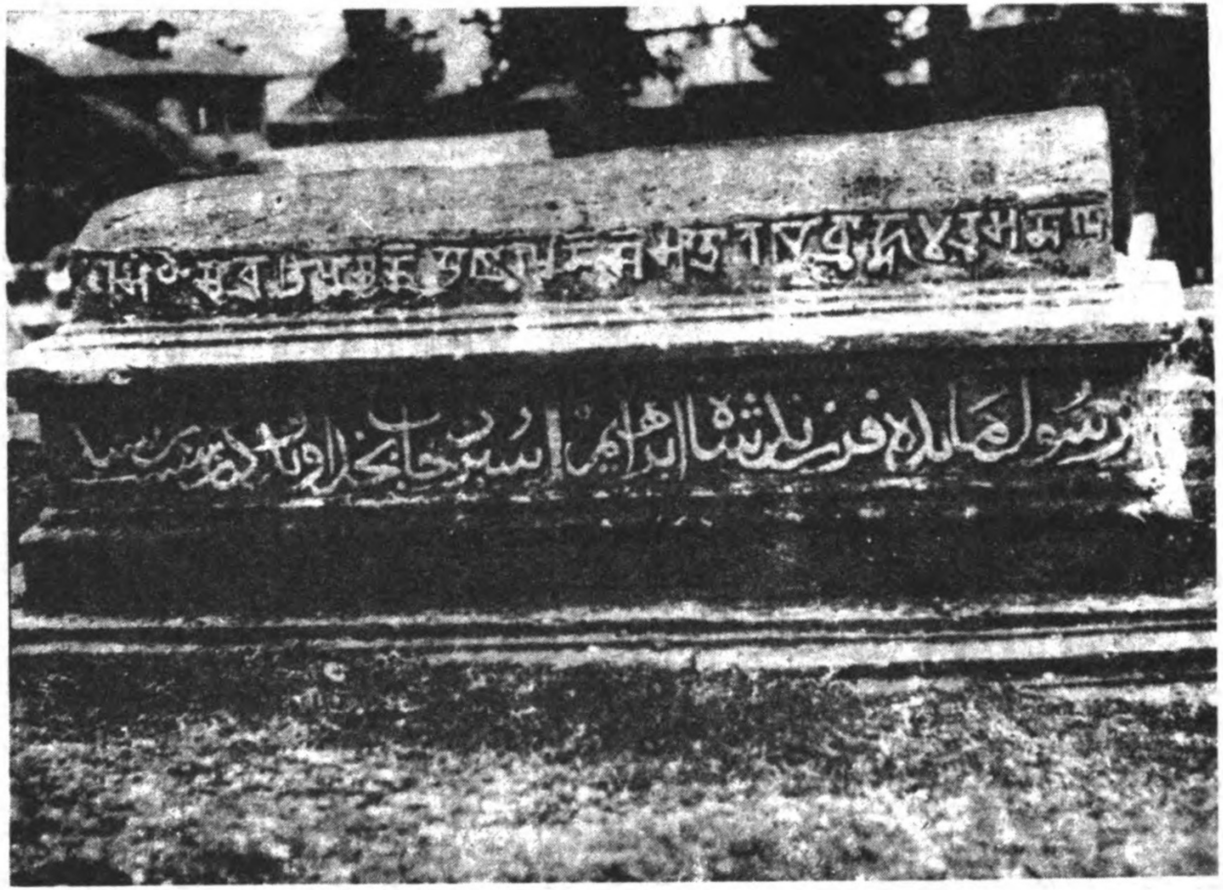
24) Quoted by R.C. Kak, *loc.cit*, p. 32.

25) Suhabhatta's daughter, Baria was married in the *Sayyid* family. See *Baharistan-i-Shahi* (*loc.cit.*), p. 56. n. 49.

26) Jonaraja's observations contradict the contention of A.K. Majumdar who holds Sikandar responsible for the religious

persecution of the Hindus without taking the Sultan's age and tutelage into consideration. Cf. Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, *The History & Culture of the Indian People.* Vol.VI, p. 379.

27) *Baharistan-i-Shahi (loc.cit.)*, p. 38.
28) *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (Rogers & Beveridge), Vol.II, p. 150.
29) *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* (Denison Rose), p. 433.
30) G.T.Vigne *Travels in Kashmir, Ladakh and Iskardo*, Vol.I, p. 405.
31) *Baharistan-i-Shahi (loc.cit.),* p. 94.
32) See R.K. Parmu, *op.cit*, p. 4



Tomb of Sheikh Baha-ud-Din, 1449 A.D., bearing inscription in Arabic & *Sharda*

THE RISING DAMP

10

> "Alas! From me, bright as a house on fire, have sprung these three sons, and they are like the ashes of a wood fire; unlike me, useless and without luster..... I do not consider any of them to be good and worthy son. I will not bestow the kingdom on any; he who is the strongest he will get it when I am dead; this is my purpose. Who will appreciate my worth unless many perish in the conflict after I am gone"?
>
> —Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin[1]

The symptoms of organizational breakdown of the Sultanate had already begun to manifest themselves even during the reign of mighty *Bud Shah* when his deserters, friends turned foes, political turncoats, dissipated and rebellious sons and parochial group lines forced him to make his exit from the scene to take refuge in seclusion of his own home where he wrote *Shikayat*[2]to give vent to his deep feelings of remorse, disappointment, illusion of worldly happiness and vanities of human ambitions, and absurdities of power and dignity. Srivara writes:[3]

> [The growing frustration had] nearly dried up in the king's heart all the pleasures that he [had] derived from his kingdom, even as a plant is dried up in a garden by fire. There was no one who could console him or to whom he could open his heart. Destiny had

> flirted with him with a false show of happiness...

And:[4]

> In the excess of his anxiety the king became distrustful even of a shadow.

Having outlived his age, which he had spent so gloriously for the public good, not failing even for a moment to care for the needy and the deserving, *Bud Shah* could not guarantee stability of the Sultanate after his death. Nor could he guarantee the consolidation of his achievements through his weak and indolent successors. Even his own sons, Adam, Haji and Behram had given him enormous trouble and mental anxiety during his old age. While expressing his disappointment at the poor performance of his sons, the Sultan remarked:[5]

> Alas! From me, bright as a house on fire, have sprung these sons and they are like the ashes of a wood fire, unlike me, useless and without luster.

These factious, profligate, prodigal, dissolute and worthless sons did not allow him any relief from his agonies of remorse and mental pain even before providence relieved him of the scene. In the words of Srivara:[6]

> Neither the king, nor the king's sons, nor the ministers could sleep owing to mutual fears.

They launched their wars of succession and, thereby, landed the Sultanate into the frivolous pastures of intrigue to the detriment of its reputation, resources and vigour. These wars of succession favoured Haji to ascend the throne but he failed to extend his reign beyond one year and ten months due to his dissipation and excessive drinking which consumed his life. Kashmir's medieval history is replete with the anecdotes of this alcoholic Sultan's outrageous behaviour. Once when his own palace caught fire Sultan Haidar Shah (Haji), writes Srivara:[7]

> Ascending the palace in (Sikandarpura) and saw his own five chambered house in flame; he fell happy and sank into pleasures of drink.

Besides, the Sultan was so abnormal and ruthless in his dealings with his subjects that 'many..... Hindus and Muslims lost their tongues, noses and hands, and many their lives. Again, as Srivara writes:[8]

> It was more dangerous to serve the king than to embrace fire, or to go before an angry cobra, or to fall into the ocean. The fear of the king was more distressing..., the people were chastised or imprisoned for debts, and the friends of a debtor deserted him through fear lest the debt might devolve on them.

After the death of Sultan Haidar Shah, his son and successor Hassan Shah appeared on the stage that was, eventually, filled with concubines and musicians who set in the decadence of the Sultanate, the far-reaching implications of which were predictable.

Sultan Hassan Shah's reign is remembered not for any tangible achievement but for the disrepute he brought to the Sultanate by falling into the lap of luxury and pleasure, and by his wasteful use of the public exchequer on the maintenance of a huge gang of entertainers and hobby-horses of every hue. His seraglio presented a gala view of 1,200 beautiful damsels, courtesans, concubines and paramours, busy in serving wine with lewd gestures and songs; whereas his court was always a throng of performing musicians and petty misdemeanours as good in number as that of the maidens.[9] Srivara writes:[10]

> Unable to enforce his orders in governing his own country, he disliked ability in others, and liked only to watch the looks of his beloved women. These women were quick in inflicting punishments and bestowing favours on men, and were eager in accepting bribes and they, not the ministers or the servants, became the intimate friends of the king.

Apart from having given himself up to carnal pleasures, the Sultan had become addicted to narcotics. The author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* writes:[11]

> .....The Sultan, the nobles, the commoners, as well as soldiers were given to sloth and had become addicted to *bhang* (canabis sativa) and other kinds of narcotics..... This naturally crippled their capacity.... They could not ensure the security of the country.....

This state of affairs encouraged corruption. Corruption gave rise to oppression. Oppression affected wisdom and virtue badly.[12] Under these circumstances the functionaries of the Sultanate preferred anything to the common good. The nobility converted the court into a noisy sight of squabbles and intrigues; each *amir* reckoning his recalcitrant attitude to pay him dividends, and ready to side with whoever had money to hire him; and even prepared to seek foreign help for the realization of his political ascendancy; setting a trend which became an awful feature of Kashmir's political life; an easy tool of political trading in the hands of usurpers, pretenders and power-brokers to weaken the strength of real genuine claimants at different periods of history; besetting the country, thus, with the loss of its independence and facilitating total subjugation of the Kashmiris successively to the Mughal Imperium, the Pathan rampage, the Sikh vandalism, the Dogra cynicism, and the Delhi's military hegemony.

Malik Ahmad Yatu,[13] the Prime Minister of Sultan Hassan Shah, was the foremost to float an invitation to the alien *Sayyids* for help against Tazi Bhat,[14] the Commander-in-chief of the Sultan; setting in motion, thus, a novel expedient which was used by manipulative native politicians against their likes to settle their scores. Yatu's overtures to invite *Sayyids* incited many Kashmiris against the Sultanate and one Feroz warned him:[15]

> You are bringing them [*Sayyids]* back to destroy one man, but when they come all will be destroyed.... You think yourself wise and do not consider my words as

> reasonable, but you will bring them back to your mind when I am dead and you are in difficulties.

The *Sayyids*, a riotous group of great notoriety who had been turned out of the Valley for their nefarious designs, not once but twice (by *Bud Shah* and, subsequently, by Hassan Shah)[16] readily accepted the invitation and swooped, as Srivara writes:[17]

> Over this country in legions like the aquatic birds quite famished repairing to a lake.

But they were soon besotted with their own game plan of seeking the power for themselves. They commenced doing actually what was quite unimaginable. They killed Yatu who had played their host and forced the Sultan to appoint their own Sayyid Hassan Baihaqi as Prime Minister.[18] With this change-over from indigenous to alien rule, the Sultanate came to be in a state of virulent siege which pushed forward a disreputable band of *Sayyid* cohorts who wronged the Kashmiris woefully; heaping on them atrocities of which Sultan Hassan Shah was a mere spectator. They made life miserable for the Kashmiris and patronized an environment in which, as Srivara writes:[19]

> Accepting bribes was considered a virtue, oppressing the subjects was regarded wisdom, and addiction to women were reckoned happiness.

Again, Srivara writes:[20]

> These foreigners [*Sayyids]* who used formerly to live on the refuse of grains, had become rich after coming to this country [Kashmir] and had forgotten their previous history, even as men forget their previous life on coming out of the womb. They oppressed the people....

Corruption led to oppression. Oppression bred hatred. Hatred inspired revolt. Revolt led to resistance. Resistance was articulated clearly by a profound demonstration of the native unity against the *mawalis*[21](aliens) under the leadership of Jehangir Magrey, Firya Damdar, Abdal Raina, Jona Rajanak and Tazi Bhat who appealed to the masses to rise in revolt against the *Sayyid* officials and their likes; to spare as much money, food, clothing and weapons as they could and send these to head-quarters at Zaldagar; and to be prepared to swell the ranks of anti-*Sayyid* forces.[22] With heaps of grains, piles of clothes, and a large number of implements (hatchets, spades, spears etc;) the Kashmiris responded to the appeal and reported to the headquarters to engage the enemy in a fierce battle in which they demonstrated daredevilry much to the surprise of *Sayyids* who ultimately surrendered in utter disgust and humiliation[23] after causing great destruction by burning houses, localities and magnificent mansions that used to be swept clean by silvery-bosomed slender damsels, holding in their delicate hands fly-whiskers of blue horse's tail with handles set in gold. The destruction was so awful that its painful memories continued haunting the Kashmiri psyche for quite some time. The people were moved to tears when they listened to songs composed and sung to the accompaniment of the rhythmic beat of their feet and symbols to recall the grandeur of these buildings. The songs sung were:[24]

Shinav in quisseh ander Mulk-i-Kashmir
na az man as zaban-i kudak-o pir
nishasteh ba hazaran hur-o ghilman
ba khubi har yaki mah-i Jehangir
Ze uqtas-i du rang-i bahr-i Jarub
na kardandi kanizan hich taqsir

Thus, came to an end a most critical phase of the medieval history of Kashmir; a phase which not only exposed the *Sayyid* or the *mawali* machinations, manipulations and their prejudice against the Kashmiris, but also raised the curtain from the common myth that the Kashmiris reconciled with all sorts of disparities and discriminations and had not the cheek to change their plight. With their undaunted nerve, and imaginative brain and brawn they scored a resounding triumph over their detractors and reaffirmed their suzerainty over the administration of the country;[25] becoming king-makers to ensure a cake-walk for a variety of claimants to the throne. But these claimants were weak enough to usher in an era of kings. They fixed in position an era of kingmakers who engrossed themselves in the seesaw gamble of installing one Sultan and deposing the other and, thus, paved the way for rival princes to change the throne of Kashmir with increasing frequency and made possible for themselves to collect promising rich pickings from these fluid arrangements. Sultan Muhammad Shah presents an interesting feature of this gangling gamble. He was enthroned more than thrice by the kingmakers in whose hands he was just a puppet.[26]

The unity openly unfolded by the Kashmiri nobility against the *mawali* or the *Sayyid* hegemony was short-lived.[27] No sooner these aliens were removed from the scene than the Kashmiri nobles fell out among themselves; ushering in half-a-century reign of puppeteers who inflicted a lasting damage to the political autonomy of medieval Kashmir.

Two influential families, the Magreys (the natives) and the Chaks or *Chakeshas* (the foreigners) loomed large out of the multitude of the clan Kashmir in this unending power squabble.[28] For their petty politicking and manipulations, Kashmir suffered a lot. The bitter power struggle, in which these warring factions were embroiled for quite some-time, slowly exhaled the emblem of independence and in the process exasperated the native Magreys to resort to the politics of invitations. Not succeeding in making quite a dent in the struggle and war against the naturalized but formidable Chaks, Abdal, the leader of the Magreys, made recrudescence of horse-trading by approaching the Mughals for help which Emperor Babur readily extended.[29] For their lumpish designs, the Magreys, thus, opened up the vistas of Paradise for the Mughal intervention which vitiated the strength and prestige of its Sultanate; reducing it finally to a gubernatorial office of provincial governor.

Invitations resulted in humiliation. Humiliation created exasperation. Exasperation led to desperation. Desperation bred infuriation. The Kashmiris were infuriated when after the death of Babur, the Mughal governor of Punjab, Kamran (brother of Humayun) sent a punitive expedition to Kashmir in 1531 A.D.,[30] to extract tribute and to evoke a commitment of loyalty from its rulers. But their infuriation and remonstrance were lost in the dim wilds of the Valley whose soldiers had allowed unimpeded access to the Mughal forces.[31] Though short, the Mughal incursion paved the way for yet another campaign of far reaching consequences. Sent by Sultan Said Khan of Kashgar, the Mughal forces under Mirza Haidar Dughlat, a first cousin of Babur, entered the Valley without any opposition and overran the Kashmiri positions in 1533 A.D., but did not establish their rule till 1540 A.D., when popular opinion tilted in their favour as a result of the *Sunni-Shia* conflict fomented by mutual bickerings of the Magreys and the Chaks. The Magreys, representing the *Sunnis*, implored Mirza Haidar for help, whereas the *Shia* nobles tried in vain to solicit Sher Shah Suri's aid. Eagerly awaiting this opportunity, the keen and enthusiastic Mirza rose to the occasion, dislodged the rivals, placed Nazuk Shah on the throne and himself ran the administration of the country, converting it into his fiefdom.[32]

The smoothness with which the Mughal takeover of the Kashmir administration had proceeded provoked Sher Shah Suri into despatching a strong Afghan contingent in support of the defeated Chaks. The furious battle that ensued decided the fate in Mirza's favour who was tactically superior but numerically inferior to the Afghans. The Afghan army was, thus, routed and panicked into fleeing the Valley and the control of the Mirza on the administration reaffirmed.[33]

The Mirza understood the Kashmiri sentimentality better than anyone else. He began arousing the *Sunni* sentiments against the *Shias* by ruthlessly persecuting them without appreciating its baneful consequences. Not only he unleashed a storm of terror against the *Shias* of Kashmir to bring about their annihilation, he even destroyed their shrines and desecrated Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi's tomb at Zadibal.[34] The enormity of his crimes is clearly reflected in his own *Tarikh-i-Rashdi* in which he sounds too boastful to admit:[35]

> Thank God! At present time no one in Kashmir dare's openly to profess this faith but all deny it and give themselves out as good *Sunnis*.

These tactics did more harm than good to the Mirza; bringing his scholarly attainments into disrepute, and discrediting him as a cold, calculated culprit, and an architect of the *Sunni-Shia* riots, the painful memories of which are buried deep the Kashmiri psyche. Cementing increasingly the sectarian discordant views, he, thus, promoted an environment that, eventually, obliged the Kashmiris into lumping and reconciling to their constant companionship of unceasing subjugation from whose clutches they are relentlessly striving to set themselves free now.

The Mirza's profane behaviour and anti-*Shia* measures instigated the Chaks to approach Islam Shah, the successor of Sher Shah, for help which he refused owing to numerous gratifications and gifts accruing to him from the Mughal userper of Kashmir. Islam's abandoning the idea of invading Kashmir in tokenism stalled the impending danger to the Mirza for sometime. But he could not evade his doom for so long. His own follies made it hard for him to work his way up. His vindictiveness towards the most revered *Sufis*; his leanings towards non-locals; his fondness for music at the expense of the Sultanate; his crafty manoeuvres to circulate Humayun's coins and to publicise his name through the *khutba* read on Fridays; and his gratuitous insults hurled at the Kashmir's independence cast shadows and doubts on his intentions. These were sufficient to awake the people into action. They put their disputes aside and joined hands against their common enemy. The Kashmiri soldiers spearheaded the popular discontent. An isolated Mirza was killed and the autonomy restored for a brief interlude.

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) Srivara, *op.cit*, pp. 162-163.
2) Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin wrote *Shikayat* or a complaint 'in which he reproached fate with not having granted him the happiness that he had sought and deserved'. J.P. Furguson, *Kashmir*, p. 34; R.C. Kak, *op.cit*, p. 39.
3) Srivara, *op.cit*, p. 158.
4) *Ibid*, pp. 170-171.
5) *Ibid*, p.162.
6) *Ibid*, p.169.
7) *Ibid*, p.197.
8) *Ibid*, pp. 187,191-192.
9) *Baharistan-i-Shahi, op.cit*, p.75; *Tarikh-i-Hassan, op.cit*, p. 210; Jonaraja, *op.cit*, pp. 231-232.
10) Srivara, *loc.cit*, p. 256.
11) *Baharistan-i-Shahi, op.cit*, p. 76.
12) Srivara, *op.cit*, p. 252.
13) For Malik Ahmad Yatu see R.K. Parmu, *op.cit*, pp. 183-184.
14) For Tazi Bhat see P.N. K.Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir*, p. 314.
15) Srivara, *loc.cit*, p. 242.
16) *Sayyids* chose Kashmir for carving out a safer perch for devoting their attention to theology and quest for the spirit. They were fugitives from Central Asia where the Mongols and Timur had made their life miserable for political reasons. In Kashmir they took to the profession of teaching, agriculture and politics. They contracted matrimonial relations with the Sultans and, thereby, acquired high positions and great powers. However, differences set in between the *Sayyids* and the Kashmiris. Sensing the adverse consequences of their hobnobbing, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin and, subsequently, Sultan Hassan Shah expelled them from Kashmir. For details see *Studies of Kashmir Council of Research*, Vol.IV, 1983-84, pp. 16-22.
17) Vide *ibid*, p. 18.
18) R.K. Parmu, *op.cit*, p. 183.
19) Srivara, *loc.cit*, p. 252.
20) *Ibid*, p. 223.
21) The term *mawali* has been used by the author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* to denote the aliens (*Sayyids*) *loc.cit*; p. 81. But in Kashmiri language it signifies a native who is illiterate and does not subscribe to the norms of decency.
22) See *Studies of Kashmir Council of Research, op.cit.*

23) *Ibid*. Also see *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, *loc.cit*, pp. 80-83.

24) *Ibid*, pp. 85, 90-91. 'These mansions were totally destroyed so much so that peasants brought their ruins under plough in which they sowed cotton seed'. *Ibid*, p. 91.

25) *Studies of Kashmir Council of Research*, *op.cit*; Mohibul Hassan, *op.cit*, p. 106; R.K. Parmu, *op.cit*, p. 185.

26) Sultan Mohammad Shah ruled four times. R.C. Kak, *op.cit*, p. 40.

27) 'The only real national movement was the resistance offered to the *Sayyids*.... These foreigners had woefully wronged the Kashmiris who considered their presence in the country as an affront'. *Ibid*, pp. 40-41. They were expelled from the scene.

28) For these clans see *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, *loc.cit*, pp.16, 36, 75, 108-111, 119-121, 131-135,159.(Magreys); 16, 36, 69, 70, 83-84, 98-99, 103, 107-109. 111, 114-116, 133, 140, 146, 151, 168, 201, 231, 261, 276 (Chaks) R.K. Parmu, *op.cit*, pp. 246; Mohibul Hassan, *op.cit*, p. 46.

29) *Ibid*, p. 121; *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, *op.cit*, pp. 120-121.

30) *Ibid*, pp. 124-125. Also see *Tarikh-i-Hassan*, *op.cit*, p. 237.

31) *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, *loc.cit*, p.124.

32) Sultan Said Khan of Kashgar sent Mirza Haidar Duglat on an expedition against Ladakh. After the conquest of Ladakh the Mirza marched to Kashmir which he left the same year. However, he was soon approached by the Magreys for help against the Chaks. See Mohibul Hassan, *op.cit*, p. 129; *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, *op.cit*, p. 486. For *Shia's* approaching Sher Shah Suri for help against the *Sunnis* see *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, *loc.cit*, pp. 135-136.

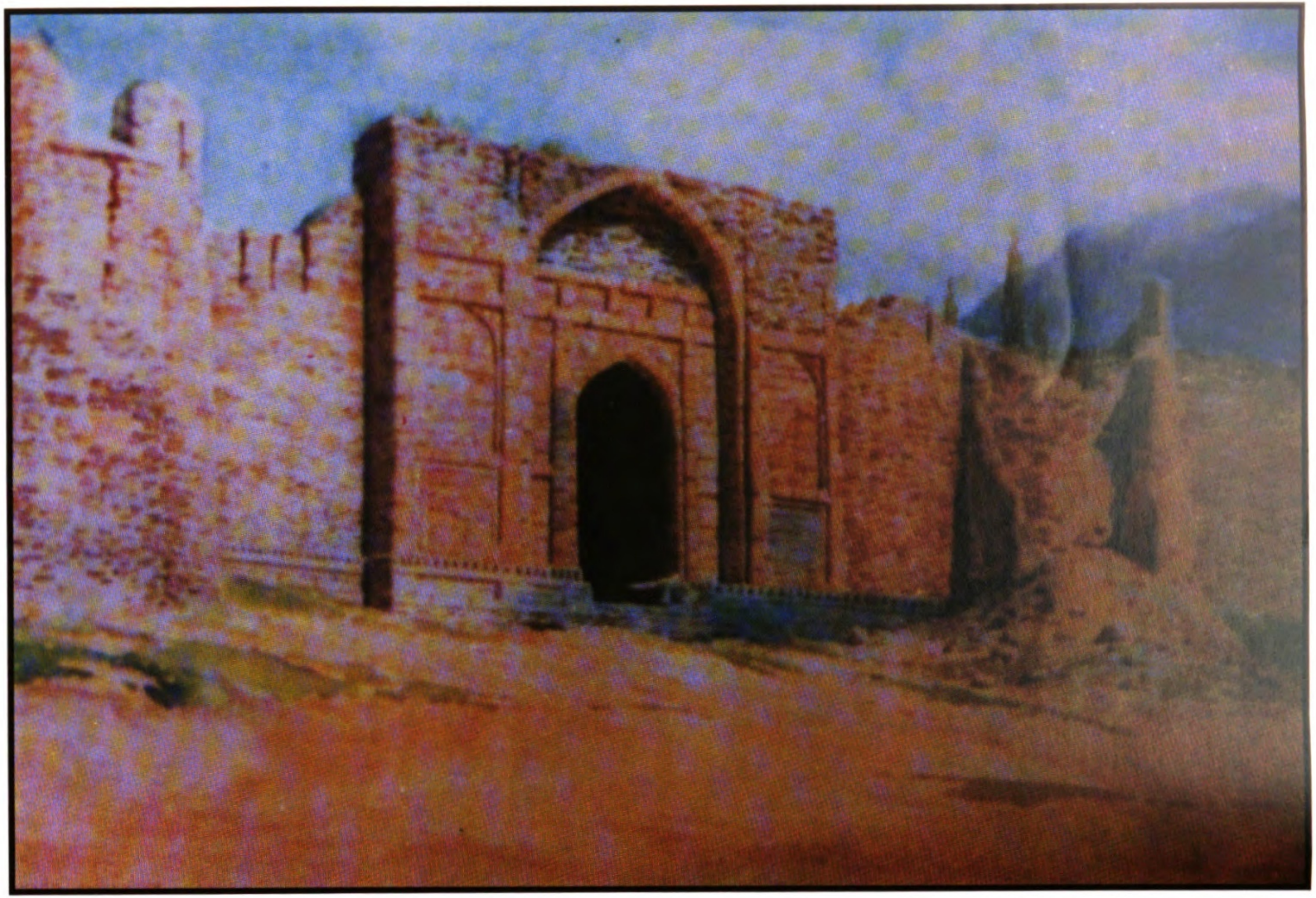
33) *Ibid*.

34) *Ibid*, pp. 140, 147; *Tarikh-i-Hassan*, *op.cit*, p. 254.

35) *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, *loc.cit*.

PART – III

THE CONSTRICTION OF KASHMIRI LIFE ON A ROUGH DEAL — A TALE OF BITTER CENTURIES



Outer wall of *Nagar Nagar* fort (Hari Parbat), built by Akbar. Reminiscent of the loss of Kashmir's independence

The Mughals treated Kashmiris as sheer-slaves whose services were forced through coercion and captivity... and as if that was not enough taxes too were imposed upon them.

—Dr. Ahad

When an *umara* or *mansabdar* requires the services of an [Kashmiri] artisan, he sends to the *bazar* for him, employing force, if necessary, to make the poor man work, and after the task is finished, the unfeeling lord pays, not according to the value of labour, but agreeably to his own standard of fair remuneration, the artisan having reason to congratulate himself if the *kora* (lash) has not been given in part payment. How can it be expected that any spirit of emulation should animate the artisan...?

—Bernier

.... In 1750 [Kashmir] came under the cruellest and worst rule of all — the rule of the Afghans, who to this day are of all the oppressive rulers in the world the most tyrannical.

—Young Husband

[The rule represented] brutal tyranny, unrelieved by good works, chivalry, or honour.

—Lawrence

Everywhere the people were in the most abject condition, exorbitantly taxed by the Sikh Government and subjected to every kind of extortion and oppression by its officers .... not one - sixteenth of the cultivable surface in cultivation, and the inhabitants, starving at home, are driven in great numbers to the plains of Hindustan.

—Moorcroft.

[The Sikhs] seemed to look upon the Kashmirians as little better than cattle.... The murder of a native by a Sikh is punished by a fine of twenty rupees, of which four rupees are paid to the family of the deceased if a Hindu, and two rupees if a Mohamedan.

—Moorcroft.

Now you [Devi Ditta Mal] should collect revenue from every quarter and root out Kashmiri influence from every quarter.

—Gulab Singh.

The Dogra Government drowned the worst hit famine victims of Kashmir by boatloads in the Wular [lake] in order to save the expenses of feeding them during the famine.

—Dr. Ahad.

Excessive greed for wealth led the Dogras to stoop so low as to patronize prostitution.

—Dr. Ahad

THE LOSS OF INDEPENDENCE — THE SIEGE WITHIN

11

[Kashmiris] had to reap what [they] had sown. [Their] running about the field and farms had been vain and useless. When trees are sown in the spring, how can wheat be reaped in the autumn?

—A Kashmiri poet

The Kashmir Sultanate was in possession of all the basic ingredients and strengths that were necessary to enable it to sustain the needs of its people, to realize their good, and above all to support its political independence. The requisite organizational, economical, military and social bases gave it internal cohesion and stability which made its independence more firmly entrenched as the basis of its material prosperity and social and spiritual good. The strong and good Sultans, who combined vision, wisdom, courage, character and capacity, necessary for the realization of a good society, nourished, preserved and protected this independence against hopeless odds. They even extended the sphere of the Kashmir Sultanate's influence far beyond its frontiers not only by cultivating diplomatic relations with as distant lands as Egypt and Macca and by exchange of gifts with the Sultans of Delhi and Gujrat, but through the glory of conquests as well. But when the Sultans were weak and failed miserably to fulfil their political roles due to their innumerable weaknesses and indifference to public good, and when the rulers lost the sheen of their souls inconsequence of their overindulgence in debauchery, *nautch*, *raqus*, wine, women, vanity and vengeance, the Sultanate came to face challenges to its authority in the guise of conspiracies, revolts, wars of succession, desertions, usurpations and sectarian discords which gradually exposed it to an imminent collapse of its internal cohesiveness; stripping it incessantly of its vitality and, eventually, rendering it too imbecile to resist the heavy hand of alien regimes.

Kashmir was not, however, destined to pride on the native unity always. The old sporadic bitter internecine quarrels surfaced again, during the reign of Bud Shah's sucessors, to vitiate the political atmosphere of the Valley[1], ripping the *Sunnis* and the *Shias* apart to decide which king ascended the throne and for how long. It was the old vicious circle of politics and court intrigues that divided the people into camps; one group determined to destroy the Shah Miri rule, and the other interested in preserving the good old days. The resultant exchange of violent parochial feelings and the return of their dividends of sectarian rampage, that besieged the Valley, had to yield to the history's judgement which favoured the Chaks[2] with the throne till 1586 A.D., when their last Sultan's stupidity facilitated the Mughal annexation of Kashmir.

But the occupation of the Kashmir throne by the Chaks never proceeded past the three decades which period they spent cruising around confusion, wasting time on trivialities, revelleries and love-making, and, thus, changing positions with growing frequency.[3] By avoiding doing what was really important for the national good, and not giving a significant weight to the majority public view, the Chak rulers busied themselves with trifles and allowed the power to slip out of their hands. Their nonchalant attitude encouraged bitterness. Bitterness gave way to bickerings. Bickerings fostered turmoil. Turmoil prompted turbulence. Turbulence assumed disproportionate weight to place in a difficult situation of ecclesiastical tyranny that swept everything before it to win the centre of the Kashmir political stage.

Chak's was an era of political corruption, social oppression, and sectarian differentiation which loomed large in every Kashmiri mind. They accelerated this differentiation to distract the public attention from the real issue of the Kashmiri versus the non-Kashmiri or the *mawali* in the dictum of the contemporary Persian chroniclers.[4] Although naturalized in Kashmir, these old Chaks had a hangover from their old and obsolete ancestral species that inspired them to develop a siege mentality, and indifference to the indigenous susceptibilities. Their sectarian bias, and animosity towards the Gilgiti Chaks[5] (the *Sunni* Chaks) too played a dirty trick of adding insult to injury; paving the way, thus, for the steadily weakening of the Sultanate and dampening the expectations of any improvement in the circumstances.

Never in its history has Kashmir represented such disillusionment, sectarian bickerings and riots, and sufferings and quarrels as in the time of Chaks. They did everything to sacrifice larger Kashmiri interests at the altar of sectarian profit and, thus, subordinated themselves to the whims of shifting paradigms of religious morality which resulted in casting a deep gloom over the whole community of Kashmiris, marginalizing every chance of consolation in the circumstances to a considerable extent. Once in office these rulers attempted to deal with their opponents and subjects by means of a double policy: one to perpetuate their rule by liquidating their enemies — which failed to stabilize them politically, and the failing deprived the medieval Kashmir of all the opportunities to come out of its recurring strife and disorder—; the other to propagate *Shiaism* which they endeavoured to achieve by creating a socio-religious and ideological identity not in conformity with the majority public view. To obtain control over religious affairs, they manipulated *Shia* loyalties and in the process incurred *Sunni* displeasure and disloyalty which failed them miserably to create an abiding cultural identity.

The foundations of the Chak regime were laid in 1561 A.D., by Ghazi Khan[6] with whose accession the sectarian rancour raised its ugly head again to hit the social, religious and moral moorings of the society; an unfortunate turn of events; this time against the *Sunnis*. In a short span of his reign, Ghazi Khan's name became synonymous with oppression and cruelty. The author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* writes:[7]

> In acts of cruelty and oppression, in causing bloodshed and in gouging out eyes of his enemies, in inflicting physical tortures and in chopping off limbs of human beings and in killing near and distant ones, no one has ever known or heard of a tyrant like him.

His successors were equal of him in their attitude and behaviour towards the beleaguered *Sunni* religious leaders and their followers. In their attempt to propagate *Shiaism* they suppressed the *Sunnis* and engineered their massacre with impunity; beheading many dissenting voices to pulverize the opposition.[8] Their ignominious behaviour and inveigh against the *Hanafis* goaded them into hurling invectives and insults at the shrines through a skating routine which often resulted in reflating rioting through the cities and towns. Dissonant voices resulted in murmur. Murmur swelled into roar. Roar inspired uproar. Uproar led to invectives. Invectives created violence. Violence swelled into turbulence. Turbulence amplified disaster. Disaster nurtured destruction. No wonder, the blood of innocent feeble-minded people of both the sects in this destruction spilt down the streets of Kashmir; forcing a large number of *Sunnis* to flee the country for safety. Those who stayed back strove too hard to seek revenge and retribution for the outrages perpetrated by the Chaks.[9]

In this strange confluence of circumstances, characterized by religious differentiation, and retaliation and retribution for sectarian assassinations, the courtiers and the functionaries of the kingdom became polarized into two factions; one supporting the *Sunni* cause, and the other those of the *Shias*; ostensibly for sectarian considerations but actually for exploiting the situation for private gains. Thus, ceasing to serve the kingdom, they began to act on behalf of the personal and factional interests of the sects; allowing themselves to thrive on momentary gains and, thereby, pushing the people into a cesspool of perpetual suffering and misery.

The forces of disharmony and the sectarian infighting, set in motion by the Chaks, reached a new climax during the reign of Hassan Shah[10] (1563-1570 A.D.), when Qazi Musa and Mulla Yusuf, the notable *Sunni* clergymen were executed in retribution for the execution of Yusuf

Aindar, a *Shia* soldier; and when their bodies were dragged across the streets of the capital city to prickle the people with horror.[11] The entire episode of these killings and counter-killings terrorized the people badly, shaking their faith in the administration immensely. And in a tearing hurry the terror-stricken *Sunnis* took counsel together and reached a consensus on despatching a deputation, comprising Sheikh Abdun-Nabi, Mulla Abdulla and others to the Emperor Akbar to seek his help to mitigate their suffering. Ali Koka and Dati-Koka, "the main accomplices in the conspiracy [of sectarian riots]", records the author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, were also among the deputationists to brief Akbar about the Kashmir happenings.[12] Though eagerly awaiting such opportunity, the Emperor was not immediately galvanized into action. He remained calm by adopting a wait-and-see attitude, for he knew better the risks involved in a hasty campaign to pierce through the rock-solid natural defence and geo-physical armour of Kashmir. Once again the mighty Akbar preferred discretion to valour and sent a second diplomatic mission to ascertain the situation obtaining in Kashmir.[13]

There appeared, no doubt, an oasis of calm in the noisy Kashmir situation when Yousuf Shah ascended the throne at a young age, after the death of his father, Sultan Ali Shah. But his preoccupations with poetry, song and romance did not permit him to devote adequate attention to the affairs of the kingdom. *Baharistan-i-Shahi* has portrayed him as a sensuous, graceful character and lover of beauty and music:[14]

> Yousuf Shah was gifted with a beautiful and graceful body. He was well versed in music

> and Hindi, Kashmiri and Persian poetry. His compositions were popular with the lovers of music.....He spent most of his time in physical and sensuous enjoyments; he amused himself with sport, gave himself up to the tune of the lute and dulcimer.....

The legendary Zoon's (Habba Khatoon) love and romance so engrossed him as not to allow him to even think about taking a little dig at his adversaries. The author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* writes:[15]

> [Yousuf Shah gave himself up to romance] after the true spirit of the verse: 'enjoy yourself because in just a twinkling of the eye, the autumn is about to arrive and the spring about to go'.

His dispositions to music and romance proved to be a costly indulgence; cutting loose his grip on the administration; and encouraging miscreants to create havoc and to even instigate his own son prince Yaqub to revolt against him. Thus, within months of his accession Sultan Yousuf Shah was dethroned to flee the country and fall in the Mughal lap. He implored the Mughals for help. It was a risky choice which, eventually, accelerated the process of converting Kashmir into a Mughal *Subha* and dragging away its last independent king from the scene to face humiliation, imprisonment, and what the poet had anticipated:[16]

guftan ay dil maraw anja ki giriftar shawi
'agebat rafti-o-ham gufti manat pish amd.

(Oh my dear, much did I entreat ye not to go
to a place where ye be caught. ye did go and
then happened what I had feared.)

While the Mughals were slow in their quest for the occupation of Kashmir, they remained in a constant state of alert; keeping themselves well informed about the Kashmir developments through their missions accredited to the Valley from time to time. They were waiting to strike when the iron was hot. And the iron turned red hot when Yousuf Shah ascended the throne. On his accession there appeared a transitory oasis of calm in the Kashmir situation. But stirrings of unrest and discontent did not allow it to stretch its legs to provide some comfort to the people beyond a few months. His regime generated a lot of political heat in the Valley. In order to force a showdown with his opponents he approached Akbar for help.[17] A king in person imploring for help to regain his lost kingdom, which was virtually a boardroom of intrigues, was bound to inflate the Mughal interest in Kashmir. It was a rarely marvellous opportunity which history very seldom has offered to monarchs; an offer heavily loaded in favour of Emperor Akbar; an opportunity that offered him a welcome shade from the scorching heat of India. He could have hardly escaped it for it possessed assurance of the Mughal penetration into the Paradise with the active support of its own ruler, and those of its imminent religious leaders, such as Sheikh Yaqub Surfi and Baba Daud Khaki, who had already entreated the Emperor for his interference in the Kashmir affairs menaced by the sectarian crises.[18]

The entire episode intensified the Mughal appetite for Kashmir; prompting them to action and exploit the opportunity for their own advantage.

So eagerly, nay even desperately awaiting this golden opportunity, which carried promising assurances for vindicating his earlier misadventures in Kashmir, Emperor Akbar did not take time to send Raja Man Singh and Mirza Yousuf Khan to accomplish his much cherished desire for annexing the Valley, apparently under the pretext of wanting to help Sultan Yousuf Shah to regain his throne. By the time they reached Lahore, Abdal Bhat (a prominent medieval politician of famous Bhat nobility who combined in himself the twin qualities of shrewdness and diplomacy) had succeeded in persuading Yousuf Shah to disassociate himself from the company of the Mughal troops and return to the Valley without entertaining any fears. Ensnared by a false promise of returning to his throne without any foreign help, Yousuf Shah deserted the Mughals. He regained his throne in 1580 A.D., not with the local support but by relieving Abdal Bhat of his life with a single stroke of his dragon-piercing lance in the battle of Sopore.[19]

Yousuf Shah's double-crossing dampened the Mughal expectations of the expeditious annexation of Kashmir. But Akbar was not accustomed to this kind of deception; nor was he the sort of Emperor who would falter once he had set his eyes on something so dear to him. Kashmir had become an obsession with him, especially for its promising strategic indispensability for furthering his imperialistic designs; and for vindicating his honour shaken by his previous misadventures. Realizing adequately the risks involved in undertaking a routine military expedition against Kashmir in front of its insurmountable natural defence barriers, and in view of his earlier failures to annex it, Akbar opted for a diplomatic treachery.[20] He opened with a political mission to the Kashmir Sultanate to which Sultan Yousuf Shah reciprocated by giving an enthusiastic reception to the Mughal messenger, and by acknowledging the imperial paramountcy[21] much to the disliking of the Kashmiri nobility and the *zamindars*, not prepared, irretrievably, to compromise their independence.[22]

The Emperor Akbar was not content with the friendly gesture and overtures of subordination of Sultan Yousuf Shah. He was bent upon stamping his imperial authority and monopoly on Kashmir's saffron, shawl, silk, scenery, springs, stag (*hangool*), walnut, almond, fruits and flowers. He was interested in the physical occupation of Kashmir which promised enormous strategic potential to counter-poise any possible threat from Central Asia that might assume alarming proportions in future. Thus, he despatched a strong Mughal force under the command of Raja Bhagwan Das, Shah Quli and Shah Rukh, the professional commanders, to engage Sultan Yousuf Shah in a tiring and long-drawn war which despite their military prowess, could not forge them ahead of the native forces.[23] The war overshadowed all its margins by inflicting heavy losses on the Mughals. According to an estimate, they lost as many as three thousand men in this campaign and suffered so miserably for want of food that they could hardly get one *seer* of grain for an *ashrafi* (gold coin).[24]

But the natives too were waxed to insulate themselves against the fatigue that swept over them during the course of war and befuddled them into accepting negotiations for peace, the terms of which were heavily loaded against the Valley of Kashmir. Yousuf Shah was escorted to Fatehpur Sikri where he was presented before the Emperor Akbar who ordered his imprisonment till the imperial rule was consolidated in Kashmir. Abul Fazl has described the scence in these words:[25]

> On asking why the kindness of the Shahin Shah (Akbar) has passed from his memory, and why the influence of his son [Yaqub], who had fled from the court, had increased in Kashmir? Yousuf Shah had the grace to be ashamed and to reply by silence.

After a few years in political wilderness, he died unwept and unsung in Bihar merely as a petty *jagirdar* / *mansabdar* of 500 horses with an annual income of 3600 *rupees*. The entire episode of unprecedented humiliation immensely injured the native pride, but the Kashmiris preferred silence to bursting into wails for the flag of Mughal imperialism had already been hurled atop the fort minaret and *khutba* read and coins struck in Akbar's name; and the monopolistic control imposed on saffron, silk and shawl. A quaint Persian melody played upon the *daf* (drum) and *kemanchah* (violin) filled the atmosphere of the *bazzars* (market places) of *Sheh-ri-kashmir*, catching the public sight to familiarize all and sundry with the new change that marked the end of Kashmir's independence.

Having a special strategic importance for the Emperor Akbar, the annexation of Kashmir was his first priority and imperative. It provided him with a firm base to expand his Imperium in the south, and secured for him on the Northern Frontier a strong foothold against the Central Asian powers. A weak Kashmir was likely to jeopardize his expansionism by attracting the attention of the growing Uzbek power to meddle in Kashmir affairs and, thereby, pose a threat to the Emperor's designs. Having completed the annexation of Kashmir, Akbar launched his Kabul campaign to overawe the Uzbeks and to halt their forward movement, and to persuade the rulers of Tibet to accept his overlordship.

Other benefits accruing to the Mughals from the Kashmir annexation were those innumerable blessings the nature has bestowed on her. For them the Valley's delightful gardens, apple orchards, beautiful environs, health-resorts and refreshing climate were a welcome respite from arid deserts and scorching heat of the Indian mainland.

However, the native response to the imposition of Mughal Imperium was not encouraging. It was characterized by the efforts of native politicians to rally public opinion to their side to defend their own interests under the loud rallying cry of 'independence in danger'. Thus, the Mughals had a tough time to face revolts which brought disrepute to their valour and chivalry by inflicting on them pain and suffering. The contemporary chronicles have given a gruesome account of these sufferings. In this condition the Mughals could hardly have made a dent in the circumstances were it not for the anti-*Sunni* attitude of the local authorities and the resultant tide of opposition against Yaqub Shah, the son and successor of Yousuf Shah, whose fanaticism had wreaked havoc on his subjects.[27] His initial success in the brief skirmishes against the Mughal soldiers swelled his heart with pride and during respite he mindlessly widened the gulf between the *Sunnis* and the *Shias* by his policy of religious persecution.[28] Thus, his imprudence and bigoted behaviour weakened his base to a large extent, stirring up a storm of public uproar which inspired Sheikh Yaqub Surfi and other local notables to extract imperial promise that after the establishment of the Mughal rule Emperor Akbar would ensure that there was:[29]

a) complete freedom of worship and no interference in religious matters;
b) no interference in the purchase and sale of commodities and the rates of cereals;
c) no *begar* or forced labour;
d) no oppression and molestation;
e) no room for making Kashmiris slaves and servants;
f) no provision for mischievous Kashmiri leaders to perform administrative duties of Kashmir; and
g) justice and non-sufferance of wickedness.

These imperial commitments on a range of issues enabled Surfi to mobilize the *zamindar's* support in favour of the Mughal forces.[30] This turned the tide in favour of Qasim Khan, the Mughal general.[31] Not withstanding the humiliation Yaqub Shah fled to Kishtwar.[32]

The Mughal success against the Chaks, with the active support of the natives, emboldened Qasim Khan to proceed with terrible vengeance against his enemies. He arrested prominent nobles and disgorged their assets and sent Baba Khalil, Baba Mehdi and Sayyid Mubarak to the Mughal *Darbar* as political prisoners.[33] It was a tactical error; a provocative gesture; a sudden stabbing in the stomach; and a stinging blow to Kashmiri pride and sentiment which aroused an indignant response to the newly established Mughal Imperium; profusely inciting the *zamindars* of Lar and Nagam to repulse the advances of alien soldiers. A large following in the local peasantry and soldiery took up the cause.[34] But they soon broke down by falling into the Mughal baiting trap. The decline of their mutual trust and believing too failed them in their multi-sided struggle; compelling them to submit and surrender to the Imperium. The stubborn Yaqub Shah surrendered. He was finally sent to join his father in the realms of wilderness.[35]

The Mughals now offered the hand of reconciliation, negotiation, peace and appeasement. The Kashmiris reciprocated by assisting them in the work of consolidation of imperialism and the restoration of peace in Kashmir which came to be called as *Subha* Kashmir. The *Subha* was entrusted to the care of a *Subehdar* (Governor); the foremost being Mirza Yusuf Khan Rizvi, whose benevolence overshadowed the harshness of Qasim Khan. He remained *Subehdar* till 1590 A.D., and during the tenure of his office he resisted the imperial attempts to enhance the revenue of the *Subha*.[36]

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin's successors, especially Haider Shah, Hassan, Muhammad Shah and Fateh Shah were lacking in administrative competence and diplomacy. Surrounded by sycophants, they showed callous disregard for socio-economic and political problems confronting the Sultanate. They proved their worthlessness by not prioritizing their work to reduce the political stresses, and as a result tensions rocked the Valley that destabilized the Sultanate and encouraged a struggle between powerful but mutually jealous groups for political supremacy. For details see G.M.D. Sufi, *Kashir*, I, p. 187.

2) The Chaks came to Kashmir in the beginning of the 14th century A.D., under their leader Langar Chak. They are also known as *Tsaks*. Walter Lawrence, *op.cit*, pp. 193-194, 30. Srivara calls them *Chakra*; see *op.cit*, pp. 102, 292. For their origin, which is not clearly known, see R.K. Parmu, *op.cit*, pp. 217, 246-248; Mohibul Hassan, *op.cit*, p.46; *Tarikh-i-Hassan, op.cit*, pp. 217-218. Also see *Baharistan-i-Shahi, op.cit*, pp.. 16, 36, 69-70, 83-84, 111-116, 140-151, 201, 264, 270, 276.

3) The Chaks gained power by coup *detate*, but failed to retain it beyond thirty-two years which period they spent in seeking their own pleasures and in graftifying their vanities by fomenting sectarian bickerings between the *Sunnis* and the *Shias*. The ferocity of Ghazi Chak, the first ruler of this dynasty, was almost incredible. See R.C. Kak, *op.cit*, p. 42.

4) See : *The Rising Damp.*

5) The Gilgiti Chaks, who settled at Kupwara, adhered to the *Sunn*i faith and were of *Hanafi* sect.(*Tarikh-i-Hassan, op.cit*, pp. 217-218). The *Nurbakshi* Chaks persecuted them.

6) For details see Nizam-ud-Din, *Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, pp. 41-53; *Baharistan-i-Shah, op.cit*, pp. 165-168. Also see note 18.

7) *Baharistan-i-Shahi, loc.cit*, p. 167.

8) See *ibid*, pp. 168-170, 172-173, 177.

9) *Ibid*, pp. 172-173.

10) For Hassan Shah see *ibid*, pp. 168-171; Nizam-ud-Din, *loc.cit*, pp. 51-58.

11) *Baharistan-i-Shahi.*

12) *Ibid*, p. 173. Also see Abdul Majid Mattoo, *Kashmir under the Mughals*, p. 5.

13) See *ibid.*

14) *Baharistan-i-Shahi, op.cit*, p. 219.

15) *Ibid.*

16) *Ibid*, p. 205.

17) Abdul Majid Mattoo,*loc.cit*, p. 6.

18) Abul Fazl states that at the request of Kashmiri nobles, Emperor Akbar declared: '...whenever a ruler engages himself in his own pleasures and spends his time in gratifying his lusts and does not attend to the cherishing of his subjects and sympathising with the oppressed and to overthrow oppressors, the Lord of the age (Akbar) to whom Almighty God has given power and made him the governor of the terrestrial, should for the sake of thanks-giving to God strive to uproot that tyrant (Ghazi Shah), and to make over the inhabitants of his country to be the prudent and just minded.' *Akbar Nama* (H.Beveridge), II, p. 197.

19) For details of these overtures see *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, op. cit; pp. 206-211; Abdul Majid Mattoo, *loc.cit*, p. 6.

20) *Ibid.*

21) He even sent his son, Haidar, alongwith valuable presents to the Mughal court.*Ibid.*

22) Some nobles and *zamindars* threatened to dethrone Yousuf Shah for his hobnobbing with the Mughals. *Ibid.*

23) *Akbar Nama*, *op.cit*, 111, pp. 476, 480, 724-725.

24) Haidar Malik, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, f.159 a.

25) *Akbar Nama*, *op.cit*, 111, p. 738.

26) Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, *op.cit*, p. 536. According to Haidar Malik, Yousuf Shah received *rupees* 100 per day for his expenses (*Tarikh-i-Kashmir* f. 1596). V.A Smith writes that his income ranged between *rupees* 2100 to 2500 a month. *Akbar, The Great Mogul*, p. 173.

27) Apart from the *Sunni* Muslims, he persecuted the Hindus and imposed *jazia* on them. Suka, *op.cit*, p. 420.

28) He antagonized the *Sunnis* by adopting controversial methods for the propagation of *Shiaism*. The replacement of the *Sunni Qazee*, Musa, by a *Shia*, Mulla Ganai and his subsequent execution turned the *Sunnis* against Yaqub Shah. For details see *Akbar Nama*, *op.cit*, 111, p. 762-763; Haidar Malik, *op.cit*, f.1616.

29) Azam Didamari, *Tarikh-i-Azami* (Munshi Ashraf) p. 178. Also see Mohibul Hassan, *op.cit*, p. 84, n. 3.

30) Abdul Majid Mattoo, *op.cit*, pp. 7-8.

31) For details see *Akbar Nama*, *op.cit*, 111, p. 764.

32) *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, *op.cit*, p. 248; Azam, *op.cit*, p. 180.

33) *Cf. Akbar Nama*, *op.cit*, 111, p. 787. Abul Fazl holds an opposite view. According to him, these Kashmiris were received with respect

and princely favoures, and Akbar treated them well.

34) *Ibid*, p. 796.

35) *Ibid*, p. 846.

36) Yusuf Rizvi purchased peace by bribing the Kashmiris. He distributed prizes and awards and turned the Kashmiris against their own leaders. *Cf.*, *ibid*, pp. 798-799.

THE MUGHAL IMPERIUM

12

You *deodar* of the forest,
the saw [of time]
has cut thee into little bits,
and reduced thee to dust.
—A Kashmiri poet.

The hoisting of the Mughal flag on the soil of Kashmir appears to have drawn large crowds of the Kashmiris from lanes and streets to witness a tremendous spectacle of the formal subordination of their interests to the foreign Imperium. Little did they know then what kind of trauma they were going to pass through in future! The occasion seems to have kicked up a *tamasha* for the people who, due to recreational limitations of the times, were enthralled by this imperial ceremony of far-reaching implications, carrying in its fold an abhorring long-term prognosis of subjugation of the Paradise to which the Kashmiris are virulently opposed now.

The Mughal appetite for Kashmir grew by what it fed on, the political naivety of the natives which sowed the seeds of a whirlwind for the Imperium to reap. The Kashmiris implored the Mughal intervention with implicit hope that His Majesty, the Emperor Akbar would exert his influence on the Chaks and persuade them to refrain from their unreconciled confrontationist attitude towards their *Sunni* subjects. They looked upon the Imperium with alleviating vision and believed in its final justice to dissolve the ugly ills of the sectarianism promoted by the Chak rulers of the Valley. But the arrangement was unprofitable, nay extremely dangerous for it finally worked to strip away their independence, the restoration of which has remained a distant dream for the Kashmiris to achieve.

The superiority of the Mughal Imperium was established in Kashmir after many ups and downs, and through persuation, appeasement and liberal distribution of awards, titles, *jagirs*, *mansabs* and special lucrative concessions.[1] Apart from these, the stratagem of matrimonial alliances was used to befriend the formidable and restive *zamindars*. The daughter of Shamsi Chak, a notable *zamindar*, was married to Akbar and the daughters of Mubarak Khan and Hussain Chak were wedded to prince Salim.[2] Other notable families too offered their daughters in marriage to the Mughals which cemented the roots of the Imperium in the Valley.[3] A sizeable number of the Kashmiri influential families, thus, became the real representatives of the Imperium; a condominium of noble lineages bound to the Mughal Emperors by family ties and political concessions. They in turn made their clients the supporters of the Imperium.

The support of intelligentsia too was won through cash awards and land grants. Haidar Malik, the notable Kashmiri historian and the author of *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, being the most potential beneficiary of this dispensation; he was also given the title of *Raisul-Malik* and *Chegtai*.[4] The religious elite: *ulamas*, scholars, poets and *Sufis* were also lured into the service of the Empire. Stipends were provided for scholars. The land grants were conferred upon the *ulamas*.[5] Besides, grants of landed property were made in favour of *Khankahas*; *waqfs* were donated to provide income for shrines, tombs and schools.[6] Arrangements were also made for charities and for feeding the *fakirs* and the *peers*. These benevolent gestures made the *ulamas*, scholars, poets and intellectuals the faithful servants of the Mughal Imperium.

The merchant and commercial class also fell into line as their occupations grew in importance due to wider market networks and boom in local enterprises. Sustained by imperial consumer demand, the merchants, traders and their dependents prospered and became real good supporters of the Mughal rule in Kashmir.[7]

And those who did not reconcile themselves to the new regime were severely oppressed and inhumanely treated. A large number of them was killed. Many more were publically executed. Their dead bodies were displayed for a couple of days to create fear among the people and throw them into complete disarray. Only when they produced nasty smell, the dead bodies were buried.[8]

To quell the opposition, the Mughals made use of both intimidation and appeasement. They conferred several benefits on the Valley as a way of finding tranquillity and security in its uncertain atmosphere which had become even more unstable in consequence of famines, fires and floods that had interrupted the normal life very badly at intervals. In 1597 A.D., when the Emperor Akbar visited the Valley third time, a severe famine caused terrible devastation in Kashmir; rendering many mothers, as Father Jerome Xavier writes:[9]

> Destitute, and having no means of nourishing their children exposed them for sale in the public places of the city. Moved to compassion by their pitiable sight, the Father bought many of these little ones, who, soon after receiving baptism, yielded up their spirits to their creator.

There was complete and utter despair in the *Subha* and the conditions worsened further owing to the aggravation of food scarcity caused by the camping of imperial troops in thousands, besides abandoning of agricultural lands by the peasantry in consequence of sporadic skirmishes between the Chaks and the Mughals.[10] Exorbitantly expensive food stuffs made the life of masses extremely miserable as these were beyond their meagre means. The horrific sight of starvation deaths so deeply moved the Emperor Akbar that he immediately ordered the opening of free *langar-khanas* to feed the famine-stricken people.[11] Other timely measures such as fixing of the prices of commodities and giving cash grants to the needy too assuaged the grief of the people. To supplement their employment, the Emperor launched an imperial project for the construction of Nagar Nagar fort. A large number of people, both men and women, worked on the project against adequate remuneration. *Begar* was abolished. An inscription over the main gate of the fort wall reveals:

> No one was taken on *begar*, or forced labour
> for this imperial project, each worker was
> paid fully for his or her labour.

The Emperor also overhauled the wage system of labourers engaged in saffron collection. These labourers were miserly paid two *pals* of salt for cleaning two *pals* of saffron from the petals and the stamens.[12] Akbar abolished this practice to the great relief of the petty labourers and, thereby, won active facilitators of his Imperium.

Akbar's son Jehangir had a nuanced attitude and lover's feelings for Kashmir; his sheer love stimulated him to even greater effort to ensure the prosperity of its people.[13] He recognized that the welfare of the people was a key factor for preserving the beauties of Kashmir, and want and hunger were destructive enough to convert this Paradise into a hell. No prosperity was imaginable without peace; the perfect peace bore to the Kashmiris the same relation which perfect welfare bore to prosperity. Both prosperity and peace were, thus, essential to cultivate Kashmir's natural beauties amidst which the Emperor wanted not only to spend his days but also to lay buried after his death. That Jehangir was pro-Kashmir appears in all clarity when he writes in his memoirs that his last wish was to die in Kashmir. Tughara recalls the Emperor's passion through this couplet:[14]

> *Az Shah-i-Jehangir dameh nazah chu justandba khawahish-i-dil guft ki Kashmir digger hech.*
>
> (When Jehangir was asked on his death bed what his last wish was? He replied from his heart: Kashmir, and nothing else.)

Such an emotional imperial involvement in Kashmir was bound to give a welcome boost to its economy, and if anything untoward happened the Emperor became increasingly restive, and immediately made restitution for the damages done either by flood, draught, fire or severe winter. When in 1622 A.D., thousands of Kashmiris died of terrible plague and more than 12000 houses got burnt in a devastating fire, Jehangir ordered rescue-operations to counteract the torments of the worst calamities.[15]

His successor Shah Jehan also rehabilitated thousands of Kashmiris who had suffered greatly due to deadly floods that occurred during his reign. Apart from opening free *langer-khanas*, he distributed loans, seeds and oxen among the peasants and abolished taxes of *sardarakhti* and *kahcharai.*[16]

After having consolidated their position in the Valley, the Mughals set about the task of reorganizing the administration; bringing it on a par with that of the other *Subhas* of the Empire. They introduced a uniform system of administration, coinage, official language and public services and attempted to avoid compromising religion for politics. The imperial administrative machinery was elaborate at the centre and in touch with provincial and local forces throughout the Empire. The business of administration was carried on by princes, governors, local village chiefs and *zamindars* without whom the central and provincial governments were helpless. All these notables played an important role and were bound to the Mughal Imperium through a complex system of opportunities and constraints, and obligations and loyalties.[17]They had a liaison with each other and would often strengthen their working relationship through matrimonial alliances.

The smooth functioning of the Mughal uniform administrative set-up largely depended upon the cooperation of local people such as *patwari*, *tehwildar*, *amil*, *fotadar*, *darogah*, *qaunungo* and average peasants.[18] All these people were directly or indirectly associated with the administration and their collaboration was very forthcoming because participation in administration enhanced their prestige, earned them respectability and increased their political importance. These obligations secured for the Imperium the loyalty and obedience of these people and through them of other subjects of the Empire. The central and provincial administrators were, thus, drawn together to serve the Imperium which drew its strength from patronage extended by the central administrators to their provincial representatives who on their part bestowed a part of it on their local officials.

The Mughal Imperium evolved a strategy to cope with the problems of sectarian bickerings, that had destroyed the Chak regime, by building effective governing institutions, and mobilizing adequate local support to secure the loyalty of the entire population of Kashmir. Local bureaucracy was strengthened to dilute opposition and dissent, and *Sufis*, saints and scholars of variegated nationalities were encouraged to settle in the Valley who in course of time disseminated ideas of humanitarianism which created a convivial socio-religio atmosphere to counteract the effects of sectarian feuds and feelings. The introduction of *Naqashbandi* and *Chisti* orders propelled people towards a cordial social relationship and hassle-free environment. The *Akbar-Nama* of Abul Fazl best reflects the situation by describing a court society in which the ruler is considered a philosopher-king, protector of all his subjects regardless of their religion, a guide and mentor who brings reconciliation and love, and promotes welfare of people throughout his Empire.

The openness of the Mughal Imperium was abundantly manifest in administration which represented the native urges and aspirations and encouraged even the

Shias to find a prominent place in it inspite of their anti-establishment attitude. The most talented Kashmiris came to acquire important official desks in the Central Government and other parts of the Empire. Hussain Chak, Shamsi Chak, Iba Chak, Malik Haider, Malik Ali, Yusuf Khan, Mulla Mohsin Fani and Abdul Karim Kashmiri were conspicuous among those who served the Imperium outside Kashmir. A large number of Kashmiri notables were given *mansabs* and *jagirs* by the Emperor Aurangzeb. Mulla Muhamad Yusuf was appointed *waqia navis* of the Mughal Embassy to Iran by the Emperor Shah Jehan. Similarly Jehangir conferred the title of *Raisul Mulk* and *Chegtai* on Malik Haider.[19]

The perpetuation of the Mughal Imperium was accompanied by a policy of enlightenment and justice which clearly reflected in the changing socio-economic milieu of Kashmir. The local officials were instructed to show restraint in ignoring provocations while collecting taxes and land revenue. A systematic survey of villages was launched to determine the amount of land under cultivation, the crops grown, and their expected yield. The total revenue demand was fixed at half of the produce which was collected by the concerned officials, who, after deducting local expenses passed the balance upwards until the surplus, eventually, reached the Imperium. The revenue demand was in keeping with the fertility of the land and the span of cultivation. The burden of draughts, floods and fires, and truancies of climate and calamities were borne by both the cultivators and the assignees. The unnecessary taxes that affected the agricultural investment were done away with.[20]

The administration of justice was organized and developed on the *Hanfi* jurisprudential procedures as before but flexible accommodation of legal principles to custom and tradition was allowed without any hesitation. *Shaikhul-Islam*, *qazees* and *muftis* were appointed on the basis of their legal acumen, integrity, resourcefulness and family background to administer *Sheriat* law, the central motif of which was the realization of the moral and spiritual as well as the behavioural qualities of the individual.[21]

The judiciary remained inseparably linked with the executive, and the implementation of justice was carried through *kutwals* and *thanedars* who also decided ordinary criminal cases; though the maintenance of law and order being their prime duty. These police officials were answerable to the *Subehdar* (the vice-regent of the Emperor), who carried on the administration of the *Subah* on behalf of the Emperor and was responsible to him alone, and liable to the imperial reprimand for any violation of rules and regulations.

The imperial benevolence was profoundly evident in the improvement and extension of routes and communication linkages. About three thousand stone-cutters, miners for blasting rocks, and diggers were engaged to smooth the difficult ways on the eve of Akbar's first visit to Kashmir. Improved road connectivity between the Valley and the rest of the Mughal Empire suddenly made Kashmir part of a larger world; giving a tremendous boost to trade and commerce; and ensuring the entry of Kashmir products into the international market on a firm basis through an elaborate marketing network. The resultant growth of export trade, especially of shawl, necessitated the reorganization of woollen textile industry on the

Karkhana system or the State owned factory system. Shawl being an imperial monopoly, the Mughals evinced a strong interest in its development.[23] The Emperor Aurangzeb increased the wages of artisans to raise their standard of living. In his *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, Muhamad Khan writes:[24]

> ......Padishah ordered... to pay them 1.5 *tanka* for every *tanka* they had received before.

The socio-economic and administrative progression of Kashmir during the Mughal Imperium paid its dividends also by drawing up of the political geography of modern Kashmir; extending its territories far beyond its original frontiers, and merging with the *Subah* strategically most important principalities of Kishtwar, Punch, Pakhli, Rajouri, Noushehra and Little and Greater Tibet.[25]

The expansion of the *Subah* was absolutely in consonance with the Mughal heritage which stressed the role of the ruler as a warrior lord and an expansionist. The incorporation of these areas with the Valley was abetted by immense political and economic importance for Kashmir. Politically the *Subah* became a very significant unit for the Imperium to check the growing influence of Central Asia; and economically it assured a regular supply of *pashm* (wool) to its shawl industry from Tibet.[26]

The inclusion of Kashmir with the Mughal Empire and the establishment of communication links with the mainland of India, through the construction of imperial route via Shupian, Bhimber and Gujrat, opened up the gates of Paradise to European travellers who came and were profoundly impressed by the richness of its scenic beauty, quality of craftsmanship, art, architecture, and the character of its people marked by frankness and simplicity. They were profusely imbued with the beauty and exquisiteness of the blissful Kashmir gardens laid out by the Mughals with symmetrical arrangement of flower beds, water and fruit trees. The *Nishat*, the *Shalimar*, the *Naseem*, the *Chashma Shahi*, the most conspicuous among hundreds of the Mughal gardens on which large sums were spent annually for their upkeep, held a special fascination for notable travellers like Xavier, Goes, Palsaert, Bernier, Desideri and Fyre who visited the Valley during the Mughal rule and, eventually, introduced it to the European world through their writings and travelogues. This helped greatly in publicising the beauties of Kashmir throughout the world.

Despite these advantages, the Mughal Imperium revealed its real face when it began sapping, systematically, the native confidence, vitality and vigour by reducing and vitiating the forces of production (both the peasants and the artisans); mortgaging them up to the hilt in the hands of oppressive money-lenders.[27] That the Mughals exploited their subjects and treated them inhumanely and utilized their services almost without remuneration and with force if necessary, has been vividly described by Bernier. He writes: [28]

> When an *umara* or *mansabdar* requires the services of an artisan, he sends to the *bazar* for him, employing force, if necessary, to make the poor man work, and after the task is finished, the unfeeling lord pays, not

> according to the value of the labour, but agreeably to his own standard of fair remuneration, the artisan having reason to congratulate himself if the *kora* (lash) has not been given in part payment....

The Mughal Imperium had the style of an aggressor. It was based on the *Chegtai* heritage which stressed the role of the ruler as a divine lord and recognized subjects just his chattels. It had a whole regiment of *mansabdars* and *zamindars* to help it maintain its aura, glory and grandeur. These surrogates of imperialism were granted *jagirs* to imitate the household of the ruler. They had their own staff, servants and *harems*, besides armed retainers who helped them coerce the peasants to stick to their lands, not allowing them to flee to uninhabited regions. They enhanced the revenue, leaving the tenants with only a little of their produce and at the mercy of money-lenders. Theoretically the amount collected was half of the total crop but actually it was more than that; and everything the peasants produced was taken to deprive them of their subsistance; they were left with a little to be able to produce another crop to sustain the Imperium.

This exploitation of peasantry was fundamental to the development of imperialism; it reflected its ruthless treatment of the weaker sections of the society who suffered at the altar of ruling elite's conspicuous consumption. In a structured society comprising money-lenders, grain merchants, rich peasants and *jagirdars*, the position of landless labourers and agricultural workers was, thus, pitiable.[29] They were tightly squeezed by the illegal cesses, exorbitant taxes, and the unjust demands of the *paragana* officials who went beyond the procedures set by the Mughals for revenue collection.[30] The *amil*, the *amin*, the *choudhari*, the *qanungo*, the *bitikchi*, the *mutasadi* and *sehbandis*,[31] the power-base of the Imperium, did what they could to add to their coffers which, eventually, grew so huge that Choudhari Mahesh Koul laid out a magnificent garden on the banks of the Dal (lake); spending ill-gotten gains on its beautification.[32]

As the exploitation continued, the masses were under pressure to adjust their meagre means to satisfy their bare essentials of life. Want and hunger loomed large in their mind during calamities when the grain merchants inflated the prices of food-grains. There were no official arrangements for reserving stocks of food-grains as the Mughals introduced the cash nexus.[33]The common people were driven from pillar to post by the whimsical merchants.

Thus, the Mughal Imperium considerably constricted the neck of the native Kashmiris and never allowed them to grow as a coordinated social force, and to live according to their own choice. About fifty-seven *Subehdars* and deputy *Subehdars* represented the Mughal rule in Kashmir, and by and large their reign was marked by misrule, exploitation and exasperation. A few of them created a religious climate that revived *Sunni-Shia* sectarian syndrome and even affected Hindu-Muslim relation; eventually, resulting in inter-clan and inter-religious skrimishes. In 1622 A.D., *Jama Masjid* of Srinagar was burnt in retaliation of the destruction of a *Shia Khankah* at Zadibal[34] and within next fourteen years the entire city came to be engulfed in the *Sunni-Shia* riots in which a considerable loss of life and property took place. Similarly in 1667 A.D., and 1685-86 A.D., the sectarian bickerings unfolded their ugly wings to swing around the entire Valley.[35] However, the social conflict on sectarian lines and the Hindu-Muslim divide became more pronounced during the reign of Aurangzeb who was determined to purify the collective Muslim conscience and soul by abolishing practices not in keeping with the spirit of Islam. Thus, he set about the task of reversing the policy of conciliation of Hindus and showed partiality towards the *Sunnis* and animosity towards the *Shias* to widen their mental dissension; inciting them to rub one another down to a vanishing point and divorcing them from each other so completely as to deprive them of all chances to unite against the Imperium.

The Kashmiris fell to the Mughal imperialism owing to their own follies and parochial group attitude. Their high expectations for improvement in their plight were belied when poverty, servitude and exploitation came to sap their strength under the Mughal rule; when the sphere of their historical individuality, identity and independence was limited too narrowly by the over-whelming Imperium; when their sentiments and pride were hurt and cringed under the force of withering invectives; when the Mughal army popularized a caustic song about them, which reads:

Agar qahat-ur-rijal uftad
az an seh mihr kamjui
awwal Kumbu, duum Afgan, siyum
badzat Kashmiri.
zeh Kumbu hila me ayad
zeh Afgan kina me ayad
zeh Kashmiri na me ayad
bajuz anduh wa dilgiri

> (Do not expect any help from three categories of people even if you are suffering from famine: the Kumbus, the Afghans, and the indiscreet Kashmiris. The Kumbus cheat you by their cunning; the Afghans will only spite you; and the Kashmiris will only narrate their own sob stories and end up trying to get something out of you rather than giving you anything.)

The End of Imperium

The Mughals made possible the subjugation and annexation of a large number of petty kingdoms and the political unification of India; and fostered the art and intellect, based on the Persian tradition, Islamic concepts and Indian heritage; but at the same time they failed to keep up the tempo of their administrative efficiency beyond the reign of Shah Jehan. The cracks had begun to appear in their administrative system when in the reign of Aurangzeb the annexation of Deccan swelled the ranks of *mansabdars* and the military elite and, thereby, exerted pressure on the distribution of *jagirs* and estates. Much to their chagrin most of these new lords could not obtain scarce *jagirs*; a centripetal force that bound them together to strengthen the Central Government. The result was increased competition for scarce estates and factionalism which paved the way for the decentralization of the Mughal Imperium. Moreover, Aurangzeb's religious policy alienated the Hindu population from the Empire. His endeavours to eradicate social ills of *sati,* gambling and prostitution antagonized the Hindus and made them a bit suspicious about the package and the intensions of the Emperor.

Bereft of any acumen as they were, the successors of Aurangzeb failed to remedy the legacy of politico-socio problems left behind by him. How could they reinforce confidence among the elite and the commons when they remained mostly busy in factionalism and in creating circumstances that promoted the growth of new social forces and provided substantial basis for discontent and subsequent decadence of the Mughal Empire? The later Mughals, comprising a series of feeble rulers, engaged themselves with the succession struggles and frequently compromised the efficacy of the Imperium for petty interests, paving the way for revolts and invasions which resulted in chaos, confusion and disintegration of the Empire. Just thirty one years after the death of Aurangzeb the decadent Mughal Empire finally crumbled before Nadir Shah, the Persian monarch who had already extended his suzerainty over Isfahan, Fars and Afghanistan. He completed the process of fragmentation of the Mughal Empire into small independent States; making it an Empire only in name. Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, Gujrat and Oudh declared their independence; leaving with Delhi the northern half of the Gangetic Duab and a strip of territory hardly with the width of a hundred miles which too were threatened by his general, Ahmad Shah Abdali.

After having established himself firmly as the ruler of Afghanistan, Abdali carried a series of invasions of India and finally succeeded in wresting Punjab and Multan from the Mughals. Being near to Punjab, Kashmir could not avert his gaze. The sappy and gravy situation lured him into meddling in the Kashmir affairs. The Kashmiri nobles too played their role. Once again they postulated politicking of invitations to proceed the arrival of a new regime, and provoked a showdown with their Mughal *Subehdars* whose patience had already been exhausted by rendering assistance in removing the dead bodies that lay strewn on the streets, to be eaten by vultures, as a result of severe famine of 1746-47A.D. Devoid of armed might, dogged persistence and political unity, the Kashmiri leadership naively perceived that the Afghan rule was a merciful deliverance from further suffering. Thus, they fervently appealed Abdali to rid them of the Mughals and bring succour to them. Secret negotiations were opened with him. He was promised all assistance against the Mughals by Mir Muqim Kanth and Khwaja Didamare. Abdali accepted the invitation and his Afghan contigent entered Srinagar in triumph in 1753A.D., and Kashmir became an Afghan *Subha*.

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) *Akbar Nama;op.cit,* 111, pp. 540-541.
2) *Ibid,* p. 626.
3) *Ibid.*
4) Malik Ali, brother of Malik Haidar, was also assigned *jagirs* and a *mansab*. Others were also fabulously rewarded. *Baharistan-i-Shahi; op.cit,* p. 266; Abdul Majid Mattoo, *op.cit,* p. 150.
5) The land grants were known as *madadimash*; and the stipends were called *wazifa*. For details see Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India,* pp. 306, 312, 315.
6) Abdul Majid Mattoo; *op.cit;*
7) See Abdul Ahad, *Muslim Karkhanas of Medieval Kashmir.*
8) Abdul Majid Mattoo, *op.cit,* p. 12.
9) St. Xavier, JRASB, Vol. 23, p. 116. also see E. Denison Ross & Eillen Power, *Akbar & the Jesuits*, pp. 77-78; Abdul Ahad, *Christianity in Kashmir.*
10) *Ibid.*
11) *Akbar Nama, op.cit,* 111, p. 727.
12) Abdul Ahad, *Kashmir to Frankfurt,* p. 60 n. 110.
13) For Emperor Jehangir's involvement in Kashmir affairs see *Tuzuk-i-Jehangiri; Glawdin; History of Jehangir.*
14) Vide M.J. Akbar, *Kashmir Behind The Vale*, p. 46.
15) Vide Abdul Majid Mattoo, *op.cit,* p. 51.
16) *Ibid,* pp. 51-52, 57.
17) For Administration see Jadunath Sarkar, *Mughal Administration.*
18) *Ibid.* pp. 71-80.
19) *Cf.*Abdul Majid Mattoo; *op.cit,* p. 232.
20) *Ibid,* pp. 54-58.
21) *Ibid,* pp. 109-120.
22) *Cf.* *ibid.*
23) For details see Abdul Ahad, *Kashmir to Frankfurt,* pp. 11-12, 45, 125.
24) *Ibid,* p. 60 n. 111.
25) For details see *ibid,* p. 19; Abdul Majid Mattoo, *op.cit,* pp. 19-32.
26) *Ibid,* pp. 18-20 & notes (*Kashmir to Frankfurt*).
27) *Ibid,* p. 63; St. Xavier, *op.cit,* pp. 115-116; E.Denison Ross & Eillen Power, *op.cit.* The land revenue demand was fixed at half of the produce but the producer had to bear the brunt of extra burden in the form of *wujuhat, sairjahat, habubat* and *faruat*. See Irfan Habib, *op.cit.* pp. 227, 243; Moreland, *Agrarian System of Moslem India,* p. 122.

28) Vide Abdul Ahad, *loc.cit*, p. 63.
29) The frequent transfers of *jagirdars* necessitated the rise of agents and trustees who managed the *jagirs* in their absence. This system put the *jagirdars* to a great loss and, subsequently, compelled them to farm out their holdings to merchants who made enormous profits by collecting more amount than was due and, thereby, intensified the exploition of peasants.
30) A great number of officials visited the villages at the time of harvesting and thrashing to harass the agriculturists with revenue demands and illegal ceses.
31) For these officials see Abdul Majid Mattoo, *op.cit*, pp. 70-76.
32) *Ibid.*
33) Abdul Majid Mattoo; *op.cit*, p. 49.
34) Malik Haidar; *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, ff. 215-216.
35) For these bickerings see Abdul Majid Mattoo, *op.cit*, pp. 150-152.

THE CULTURE SHOCK

13

Pursidan naz kharabiy
gulshan zi baghban
Afghan kashid guft ki
Afghan kharab karad

When the poet asked the gardener who laid waste this garden (Kashmir)? Drawing a deep sigh he replied: 'it was the Afghan'.

This Persian couplet succinctly sums up what happened to Kashmir under the Afghan regime which converted the Valley into a Pathan colony to fill its history with a terrible chapter of brutality and ribaldry and to fix in position an apparatus whose unforgettable oppression, tyranny and corruption left the Kashmiris high and dry; and whose mischievous tricks marred the peaceful coexistence for which the Paradise was enviably reputed.

While inviting Abdali the Kashmiris had hoped that the Afghans would hammer out order from chaos and behave generously to lift their spirits up by restoring their social and cultural hegemony.[1] Little did they envisage that they would be landed into the serpentine course of culture shock, indignation, impertinence, barbarity and vulgarity. The warm smile, which their faces wore at the time of inviting Abdali and on the ceremonial occasion of unfurling the Afghan victory banner on the ramparts of Nagar fort, soon disappeared when the new regime unfolded its strong jaws to bring under control everything that Kashmir possessed; when a deceptive style, wolfish grin, and excessive greed for material possession drove it obtain whatever it could through freakish means; when its impetuosity, outrage and ferocity let it go wild to cut a human head like plucking a flower.[2]

The Afghans had developed a fierce behaviour and abnormal character while living amid inhospitable, treacherous and rugged mountains of Hindu Kush and Sulaiman Range. They had acquired notoriety as 'deceptive in their common intercourse'; and their 'conventions of amity' were 'savour of the wolf'.[3] Glutton, nasty and avaricious as they were by nature, plenty of fortune always seemed insufficient to them and far beyond their satiety; hence the intense lust for amassing as much as they could not withstanding the paying-capacity of their subjects. This subtle infusion of avarice, desire, lust and greed into their soul, mind and body largely determined the course of their actions in Kashmir.

After destroying the Mughal supremacy the Afghans ruled Kashmir for sixty-seven years during which period they least disturbed the administrative set-up established by the Mughals. They reaffirmed the Mughal administrative tradition which continued to be carried by the provincial functionaries as before under the control and supervision of the Pathan lords who were responsible to no one else but the Afghan overlord, Abdali and, subsequently, to his sucessors; Timur Shah, Zaman Shah and Shah Shuja.

What made the Afghan regime different to the Mughal Imperium was its apparatus of taxation whose economic repercussions were enormous everywhere?

The Afghan regime was sustained by the despotism of governors whose sole concern was to squeeze every penny out of the impoverished Kashmiris by imposing a variety of taxes such as: *zari-i-ashkhas* (protection tax), *zari-i-habubut* (land tax), *zari-i-daud* (double tax), *dagh-i-shawl* (stamp tax on shawls). Lawrence writes:[4]

> Men with interest were appointed as governors who wrung as much money as they could out of the wretched people of the Valley. Wealth had to be accumulated rapidly, as no one knew how many days would elapse before he was recalled to Kabul, to make room for some new needy favourite of the hour.

To support their tax apparatus and enrich themselves by foul means, the Afghans created a whole new generation of selfish and hellish officials: *maqadams, patwaris, qanungos, tehsildars, zamindars, shikdars* etc; who set themselves to serve their masters, like mosquitos and bees always ready to sting the poor Kashmiris for more tax and more money. They amassed enormous wealth by wicked means and collected a fortune of crores of *rupees* for the Afghan Governor, Azim Khan. They generated such a huge wealth for another Governor, Fateh Khan that he was able not only to quench his thirst for riches but also to pay eight lakhs of *rupees* to Ranjit Singh annually to evade his Kashmir conquest.[5] According to an another estimate, Kashmir came to maintain a huge army of 'sixty thousand horse and foot belonging to Atta Muhammad Khan [the Afghan Governor 1800-1805 A.D.], giving him also a surplus income of two lakhs of *rupees* in cash and some rolls of *pashmina*'.[6] Every Kashmiri was brought under the wide and oppressive tax-net; nobody dared it because death was the reward of defiance.[7] Even on a slightest suspicion that any Kashmiri was embroiling with the feelings of anguish or resentment against the regime the entire clan of the suspect was drowned in the Dal (lake). Some of the Afghan rulers were much given to outbursts of temper; having the tendency to fits; letting loose an orgy of loot, murder and arson. A few of them ransacked the houses of the rich and did not hesitate to even apply red-hot iron bars to the bodies of the respectable people;[8] or unleash a deadly spray of incendiary words against the learned, the revered, and the well-to-do people.[9] They punished offenders with the loss of their noses or ears for small and petty offences. They drove sadistic delight in tying up the Kashmiris, irrespective of their religious background — not only the Kashmiri Pandits as depicted in Lawrence's inspired narration — 'two and two, in grass sacks' and would sink them in the Dal. "As an amusement, a pitcher filled with ordure [was] placed on the [victim's] head [which was, subsequently,] pelt with stones till it broke, the unfortunate [Kashmiri] being blinded with filth".[10]

Their's was nothing but an era of plundering properties; an era when despicable crime, viciousness and tyranny ruled the roost; when the Kashmiris endured jeers and sneers without a murmur. It was an era when the greater spending of Abdali on his Indian campaigns and on suppressing the retaliatory uprisings of the Marathas and the Sikhs led to enlarging the revenue demand which was totally incommensurate with the Kashmiri capacity. As a result, resignation and penury found a ready soil in Kashmir to grow at an alarming speed. The Valley, thus, represented a despondent and broken look; the streets wore a deserted look; the grocers abandoned their shops; the people did

not venture out in fear of being robbed of even their scanty clothing. In the gathering gloom the prospect of survival became increasingly remote. The life came to a standstill.[11]

No one had ever thought of such a situation before. The Kashmiris had fallen on evil days. They were in total confusion; looking sullen and emaciated; presenting a sordid, squalid and tragic picture with pathetic signs of constant fear of being denuded of their honour and dignity. They were subjected to a great humiliation by the ferocious Pathans — *Buta chuk ta khosa dita,* is a Kashmiri saying which signifies a Muslim who implores a Pandit to give him a cup (*khosa*) for filling it with milk, water, oil, sugar or salt; but it becomes a teenage slang when *khosa* is spelt or pronounced as *khoshi* (sodomy); Lawrence has been grossly misguided to interpret it wrongly[12] — who were always on lookout for feeble Kashmiris to jump on their back and take a ride while placing their feet in the pockets of *phiron* (loose gown) worn by these poor creatures. Deep repugnance surrounded the Valley; the Kahsmiris were cursing the day they had invited the Pathan's to rule their land. The common sight of forcing of women of every description shattered their pride; filling them with shock and considerable disquiet about the safety of their daughters, sisters and mothers. In this embarrassing situation the women dared not go walking past the streets to be insulted by the rogues; they preferred staying indoors to avoid humiliation, abduction and molestation. The girls disguised themselves as boys and spoilt their beauty by shaving their heads—Lawrence's assertion that the Pandits were the sole followers of this practice is no longer tenable in view of the contemporary source material—to evade the Pathan overtures.[13] Even small handsome boys were prevailed upon by their parents not to venture out lest they might fall prey to the Pathan wanton mood.

The Afghan regime lasted for about sixty-seven years which period, as we have seen, was distinctly marked by chaotic administration, oppressive taxation, vandalism and culture shock. Further-more the regime did not lag behind in exciting sectarian sentiments. Flimsy excuses were exploited to enrage the *Sunnis* and the *Shias* into a frenzy of violence which resulted in loot, plunder, arson, assassinations and destruction of property.[14] Hindu-Muslim amity too was disturbed; forcing the Hindustani mercantile establishments to wind up their business in Kashmir.[15] Thus, there prevailed total anarchy and chaos which inflicted a lasting damage on industry, trade and agriculture. A considerable gloom and doom was writ large on the Kashmiri faces.

Alongside the sectarian violence came sudden incursions, of the furious Bombas, which were a source of great misery to the people. The Bombas, 'traditional enemies of Kashmir,' destroyed completely the observable signs of life; they carried loot and murder to extremes through the bands of renegades and left behind the shrieks of orphaned children and the wailing of infirm to rent the sky. They wreaked havoc on the people, killing them mercilessly to fill the atmosphere with the nauseating odour from their putrefied bodies.[16]

Close at the heels of these unforgivable events came a series of calamities which wiped off a sizeable chunk of population. The 'dead bodies lay strewn on the ground, unburied and uncremated, to be eaten by vultures. It was a horrible sight to find the famished survivors crawling their way to India and dying like flies due to exhaustion and hunger'.[17]

Again in 1814 A.D.,there occurred a severe famine due to a failure of crops and, consequently, revenue collection fell short by a lakh of *rupees*; a great loss to the exchequer for which the Afghan Governor, Azim Khan held his tax-collector, Pandit Birbal Dhar responsible. To avoid falling a victim to the wrath of the Pathan *Sardar*, Birbal Dhar decided to escape, alongwith his son,to Punjab. Entrusting the ladies of his family to the care of Qudus Gojwari, a local Muslim, the Pandit left for Punjab which had already fallen to new power: the Sikhs, who under their leader, Maharaja Ranjit Singh had almost completely dismantled Afghanistan's Indian Empire in South Asia. Imbued with ambition, Dhar's native little ingenuity impelled him, at Lahore, to involve the Sikh *Darbar* into hobnobbing which had earlier made way for the Mughal and the Afghan occupation of Kashmir. Thoroughly understanding the niceties of the politics of his times, the Dhar knew that the key to Kashmir was the Punjab and he who controlled Punjab was going to annex Kashmir.

It was a God-given opportunity for the Kashmiri Pandit to have an access to the Lahore *Darbar* through Dhyan Singh (brother of Gulab Singh) who arranged his audience with Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Pandit succeeded in propitiating the Maharaja into intervening in the Kashmir affairs.

The Sikh Maharaja was increasingly eager to occupy Kashmir. It was his cherished dream. He was desperate to possess it for it promised to enlarge his prestige in the North-West Frontier politics and to strengthen his position among the powers that were directly or indirectly interested in Kashmir.

Meanwhile the Afghan Governor of Kashmir had further alienated the Kashmiris by frightening them with dire consequences if they did not come forward to strengthen his hands to sabotage Ranjit Singh's Kashmir campaign. But no purpose was served by his threatening attitude as the *zamindars* of Kashmir had already decided to support the Maharaja. The chiefs of Akhnoor, Bhimber, Rajouri and Punch also paid no heed to the Pathan Governor's coaxing and cajolery. All these developments boosted the morale of Pandit Birbal Dhar; he persuaded the Maharaja to invade Kashmir, and even gave an undertaking to accept any penalty if the Sikh troops failed to annex the Valley. He also kept his son, Raja Kak, as a hostage for the security of the performance of the Maharaja's engagement.

With these irresistibly tempting offers, which carried promises of successful accomplishment of his mission Kashmir, the fortunes of Maharaja Ranjit Singh were on the upswing. Holding out an olive branch to him to achieve his political, economic and military objectives, these offers induced the Maharaja to send a force of 30,000 to conquer Kashmir. Although the Afghans gave a fierce battle to guard against the Sikh invasion, they were defeated at the top of the Pir Panjal. In yet another battle at Shupian they were completely routed; and Kashmir fell finally to the Sikhs in 1819 A.D. The Sikhs were so exhilarated by the news of victory that they illuminated the entire city of Lahore for three days and distributed, jubilantly, robes of honour among the nobles and their Kashmiri Pandit supporters. Scenes of jubilation among the Punjabis were everywhere in sight; in cities, towns and villages where the *Akalis*, the *Granthis*, the *Khatris* and others crowded the streets to raise shouts of 'long live the Maharaja', and to show lively interest in the occupation of Kashmir by singing and cheering loudly.

Thus, came to a quite sudden end the Muslim rule in Kashmir. The Valley passed into the non-Muslim hands once again after an interlude of five hundred years of the Muslim rule not because of any conspiracy but due to the incompetence, mismanagement and irrationality of the Afghan regime. The Pathan apparatus crumbled under its own weight. But it would be too naive to believe that Pandit Birbal had any game-plan to vindicate his communal aspirations by inviting the Sikhs. His escape to Punjab and subsequent manoeuvrings at the Lahore *Darbar* manifested his restlessness and anxiety to get rid of the Afghans who were bent upon taking him to task for his revenue liabilities. The whole hearted Muslim support that facilitated his escape, and sheltered his wife and daughter-in-law, amply negate the existence of any communal dimension to the event. His own son-in-law, Munshi Trilok betrayed him by disclosing the hiding place of the Pandit ladies to the Afghans. Munshi's disclosure caused irreparable damage not only to the Dhars but also to the Muslims who had shown exemplary courage in concealing the Pandit ladies in their house; Birbal's wife preferred suicide to compromising her honour, his daughter-in-law agreed to be sent to Kabul, and the Muslim family was put to death. Other Muslim supporters of Birbal were deprived of their *jagirs* and other assets.

However, the Muslim *zamindars* did not relent in their support to the Dhar. Not caring a straw about the Afghan feelings, they continued extending moral support to Birbal Dhar inspite of the threatening behaviour of their masters. They showed great daring by openly making preparations to welcome the Sikh troops.

But the entire community of the Pandits was trembling with fear at the thought of retaliatory course of the Pathan action against them for the 'sins' of their co-religionist. Their fears were well-founded for they were wholly and solely responsible for the transaction of Government business. This fear psychosis and worry for the safety of the community, thus, gave rise to a nasty rumour that the Pandits were in league with Birbal and his political mentors for bringing ruin to the Afghan regime by forcibly annexing Kashmir to the domains of Lahore *Darbar*. But the regime had already ruined itself through years of its misrule and oppression; it was awaiting a final blow to brittle before Ranjit Singh whose star was shining brightly on the horizon in ascendancy over all his rivals. The Kashmiri Pandit played no significant role in its downfall; Birbal Dhar was forced by the peculiar circumstances to escape to Punjab where he fell in the lap of the Sikhs to make a good use of his native talent and politicking which, eventually, proved to be a portent of disaster not only for the Pathan regime but also for the whole community of Kashmiris.

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) The prominent Kashmiri leaders Mir Muqim Kanth and Khawaja Zahir Didamari were instrumental in inducing Abdali to annex Kashmir. Mir Muqim Kanth was the deputy of Alaquli Khan; he adopted some austerity measures to redeem the declining economy of the country which, among other things, included disbanding of a number of troops and reducing the salaries of others; a tactical blunder that resulted in rallying the disaffected army round Abul Qasim Khan (a contender to the post of Governor) who declared himself the independent ruler of Kashmir. In desperation, Kanth alongwith Didamari approached Abdali and invited him to conquer Kashmir. For details see *Tarikh-i-Hassan*, II; R.K. Parmu, *op.cit*, p. 385; see G.M.D. Sufi; *Kashir*, I, pp. 295-299.

2) *Sar boridan pashi ien sangeen dil gul cheedan ast.* See G.M.D. Sufi, *Kashir*, Vol. II, p. 676.

3) Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari* (vide M.J.Akbar, *Kashmir Behind The Vale,* p. 49)

4) Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 197. Also see M. Aslam Khan, *Martial Spirit of the Kashmiris*, p. 51; Forester, *Travels*, pp. 22-25.

5) Walter Lawrence, op.cit; n.2 & p.198.

6) Garrat & Chapra, *The Events of The Court of Ranjit Singh*, p. 7.

7) 'The well to-do merchants of all communities were assembled together in the palace and ordered all their wealth on pain of death'. R.K. Parmu, *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, pp. 391-392.

8) *Ibid*, p. 392.

9) *Ibid*.

10) Walter Lawrence has relied on fabricated stories furnished to him by his Kashmiri assistants and guides who were Pandits. *Cf*; The Valley of Kashmir, p. 197. Also see R.K. Parmu, *op.cit*, p. 402.

11) R.K. Parmu, *op.cit*, pp. 392.

12) Again Walter Lawrence has been misguided to distort facts. *Cf*; The *Valley of Kashmir*; p 198.

13) That only the Pandits resorted to the practice of shaving the heads of their daughters to avoid their degredation is not tenable. Lawrence describes Koshib, an old women, to have been the procuress. 'The terror of Brahman parents, who rather than allow the degradation of their daughters, destroyed their beauty by shaving their heads or cutting their noses'. p.198.

14) R. K. Parmu, *op.cit*; p. 393.

15) *Ibid*, p. 392.
16) *Ibid*, pp. 397-398, 413-414.
17) *Ibid*, pp. 393, 407.

BEBUJ RAJ — THE BRAZEN SAVAGERY

14

Jurum ma mara choo damanigir shud
quome Singan warade Kashmir shud

(When the Sikhs entered Kashmir, the Kashmiris cried out in pain! 'our sins overtook us.')

A few thousand stupid brutal Seikhs [Sikhs] with swords at their sides or pistols in their belts drive this ingenious and numerous, but timid people, like a flock of sheep.

—Jacquemont

"Whoever of my officers is appointed in Kashmir, before occupying himself with anything, he must make the people happy and earn their good wishes. For Kashmiris are worshippers of one Universal Almighty, and their prayers shall bring the Maharaja and his Kingdom prosperity and felicity."[1]

Sounding perfectly plausible, this policy statement of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, on the occasion of victory celebrations, came as a morale booster to the Kashmiris; raising their expectations and hopes, which had diminished over the years of oppression, very high; bloating them with his passionate belief in what he was going to do with Kashmir whose annexation was a dream come true, after having baffled him twice earlier. It prompted them to believe that the political structure of their land would be topped with a noble and generous class of Governors; it would be carried by honest, dedicated and enterprising administrators; it would promote the interests of industrial, commercial and agricultural population; it would ensure abundant and regular supply of essential commodities from Punjab the frequent scarcity of which forced prices up ten to fifteen times their normal price; it would be based on principles of justice and fair play; it would guard people against falling prey to sectarian acrimony and religious discord.

But it did not take long for hopes to wither, and the poor Kashmiris were thrown from the frying-pan into the fire. They were absolutely shattered when they discovered that Ranjit Singh had simply lied to them. The first *Akali* regiment that entered Srinagar triumphantly on 15th July, 1819 A.D., failed the Maharaja by doing what he had not advised them to do. In their war outfit, the troops paraded through the city not for peace keeping duties but for hurling pejoratives, insults and abuses at the passers-by. Filled with venom, anger and hatred against the conquered, they poured great scorn, publically, on the Kashmiris and virulently promoted recrudescence of anarchy by indulging freely in loot, plunder and murder.[2] The Sikhs inaugurated a new era of *Bebuj Raj*, to quote Hameed-ullah Shahabadi; an era of unforgettable brazen savagery and Muslim bashing; an era when the majority community came to be on the receiving end of extreme bigotry and communalism which resulted in shutting down *Jama Masjid*, the most celebrated mosque in Srinagar, on the plea that its larger premises provided ample opportunity to the Muslims to assemble there to discuss community matters on week ends after Friday prayers.[3] Other mosques were also seized and converted into ware-houses. Then the *azan* or call for prayer was prohibited.[4] Phula Singh, an over enthusiastic

Sikh commander and leader of the *Nihangas* and the *Akalis* was determined to even destroy and demolish all the signs and symbols of Islamic culture in Kashmir. Actually he trained his guns on the Shrine of Shah Hamadan to blow it up, but the last-minute intervention of Pandit Birbal Dhar saved it from this outrageous attack. He had to part with his cash and a few other valuables to goad the rude and ferocious Phula Singh into giving up his ugly scheme. The big *zamindars* too had to fall in line to tie his bigotry by presenting him gifts, cash and horses.[5]

But the undesirable activities and intolerable and bitter eloquence of the new regime did not end here. These continued unabated, and manifested themselves in:[6]

a) making cow - slaughter a crime punishable by death;
b) hanging publicly butchers as a display of intent;
c) prohibiting *mozin* to give call for prayers;
d) the confiscation of *jagirs* held by the Muslim *zamindars*;
e) the pressure exercised on neo-Muslims to return to their original faith, Hinduism;
f) the forced conversion to Sikhism;
g) the revival of *sati* (of which Mujrim has left a pathetic and distressing eyewitness account in his Persian elegy, *Soz–o–Gudaz*); and
h) the exodus of Muslims to distant places to escape conversion.

The knotty problem confronting the Kashmiris, during the Sikh rule, was not politics. It was the management of public affairs that created a serious dichotomy and imbalance between the ruler and the ruled. Expected to fetch and carry for the Lahore *Darbar* all the time, the administration of the Valley was entrusted to a bureaucracy whose character and temperament were tough enough in their horror of determination to exact as much as could be from the subjects.

In his *Bebujnama*[7] (story of lawlessness), Hameedullah, an eyewitness has lifted curtain from the unfettered cruelty and high-handed action of the Sikh rule; exposing unequivocally the obnoxious face of its administration; satirically depicting the glaring inhumane traits of the bureaucracy from *patwari* upto *nazim*; coining terms and names befitting the character of the officers, and analogous with their nature and designation. The essence of these names can better be guessed than described. For example when he selects the names: *Kazib Rather* for *qaunungo*, *Adawat Kaul* for *patwari*; *Fasad Bhat* for *harkara*; *Rishwat Baba* for *qazee*; *Gurez Singh* for *Mir Shamsher*; *Shamat Singh* for police chief; *Chugli Beg* for news reporter; he reveals the true meaning and significance of their inherent character, and manner of their functioning. Finding himself unable to cope with the prevailing milieu of corruption and resignation, he gives vent to his feelings as a protest against the system; invoking God to destroy it.

While narrating all-time high incidence of crime against humanity, Khalil Mirjanpuri, another contemporary writer, states:[8]

> Jamadar Khushal Singh used the known methods of beatings and whippings, and put in prison all *kardars* in Basant Bagh [a Mohalla in Srinagar] where he put them to torture, till he collected the sum of twenty lakhs and innumerable rolls of *pashmina*.

Sohan Lal, the court chronicler of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, further substantiates the use of torture against the *kardars* when he writes:[9]

> They [the Sikh regime] put in prison all the *kardars*.... and began to realize *nazarana* [gifts] from them..... All the fine things.... were taken into possession by them.

However, fortune supplementing was the sole purpose of the administrative apparatus and, consequently, the provincial functionaries were always on their toes to satisfy the sovereign demands; filling the coffers of the Maharaja, besides their own.[10] But the *Khalasa* demands were so overbearing that even if the Governors 'pulled together with the oxen' these could not be fulfilled. These demands, as a matter of fact, determined the course of the Sikh Government's action in Kashmir which became so fraught every year that only grasping Governors were considered compatible with the wholeness of the arbitrary and the most exasperating regime. Missar Diwan Chand had his scornful dismissal revoked by presenting huge and valuable gifts and enormous wealth to the Maharaja which he raised by the grossest extortion. He was re-instated with the title of *Fateh-Jung*. Diwan Kripa Ram secured his position by amassing more than the stipulated amount of *rupees* twenty-six lakhs and shawls worth fourteen lakhs of *rupees*. Hari Singh Nalwa wrested all *jagirs* and endowments held by the *ulamas* and *Khankah's* to fulfil the *Khalasa* demand, besides his own intense lust for wealth. But the spectacle of suicide, committed by Diwan Chuni Lal, surprised non because he failed miserably to satisfy the Maharaja's demand and lacked courage to face his wrath.[11] The main concern of the Maharaja lay in 'receiving regularly the stipulated remittances than in affording even marginal satisfaction to the producers of this wealth'. The Governors were, thus, given a free hand to deal with Kashmir whose peculiar geographical position further made their way easy to carry on their mission of fleecing the people of the Valley.

Some of them had a nasty habit of crossing all barriers of brutality to perpetrate dreadful outrages, and human rights violations beyond description. Madly impulsive in letting loose a reign of terror, they hanged scores of Kashmiris publicly with great impunity and without regrets. The Governor, Bhima Singh Ardali, showed no remorse for his crimes and instead he sounded extremely boastful while counting two hundred bodies he had hanged in the first year of his Government, observed Jacquemont. The European traveller writes:[12]

> When the Governor [Bhima Singh Ardali] visited me, he told me with a very careless air that in the first year of his government he had hanged two hundred [Kashmiris] but now, one here and there was sufficient to keep country in order.

Setting out to govern Kashmir, these unbridled and haughty Governors remained greatly favourable to themselves but resolutely hostile to the natives whom they considered as a flock of sheep and worthless creatures of inferior stuff.[13] Treated little better than cattle, as Moorcroft observes, the Sikh Government did not hesitate to seize the Kashmiris as unpaid porters. He writes:[14]

> ....People accompanying us were seized by the Sikhs as unpaid porters and were not only driven along the road by a cord tying them together by arms, but their legs were bound with ropes at night to prevent their escape.

Elaborating further on the Sikh oppression, Moorcraft states:[15]

> The Sikhs appropriate 7/8 of the *sar-kishte* and 3/4 of the *pai-kishte* crops. The straw falls to the share of the cultivator but his case would be desperate, if it were not practicable to bribe the overseer or watchman to let him steal a portion of his own produce.

The Sikh rulers were the potential beneficiaries of the system whose most striking feature was the gradual replacement of the top ranking traditional functionaries of the Government by the Punjabis who had become so inebriated with power that they showed a cynical disdain for the Kashmiri culture; frequently spurning the natives didactically; completely segregating them from the mainstream to preserve their own cultural and social hegemony, identity and heritage. Besides, the linguistic barriers largely hampered them to socialize with the Kashmiris; preventing them to promote multi-culturism and to develop an understanding and just approach. Devi Das, a contemporary Punjabi minister of the Lahore *Darbar* states:[16]

> There is no report and reconciliation between Punjabi officers and Kashmiri masses, because the officers are ignorant of the Kashmiri language and the masses of the Punjabi.

The new regime sought to subordinate the Kashmiri interests to the Punjabi elitism which encouraged racialism, parochialism and communalism. The style of its working exemplified chauvinism and discrimination at its best; even the punishments meted out to the native offenders reflected racially and communally motivated discrimination. Moorcroft, an eyewitness, writes:[17]

> The murder of a native by a Sikh is punished by a fine to the Government of from sixteen to twenty rupees, of which four rupees are paid to the family of the deceased if a Hindu, and two rupees if a Muhammadan.

For solemnizing marriage, the Muslims were required to pay marriage tax; each *nikah* was validated by this tax, called *zari-nikah*. Almost all the professions and occupations, pursued by the Muslims, were brought under State taxation; even the boatmen, fishermen, wood cutters, washermen, *singhara* sellers, milkmen, sweepers and prostitutes were not immune from taxation.[18]

Similarly shawl-weavers, dyers, jewellers, iron-mongers, pattern designers and *talim* writers were the victims of impecunious circumstances. But the *shawl-bafs* were more taxed; their products being taxed at forty two custom houses. Major R. Leech writes:[19]

> The shawl-weavers of Cashmere are more taxed than workmen. They are bound to work night and day when the proceeds of the farm threaten to fall off. The shawl-merchants are also prisoners being strictly watched to prevent their emigrating.

The annual capitation on each *shawl-baf* was in the range of *rupees* 94/10; his meagre earning was always disproportionate to the cost of *shali* which he had to purchase from the Government compulsorily. It was the price of *shali*, not the shawl, that determined the economy of the country. So bad was the plight of the *shawl-bafs*, writes Birbal Kachru, that:[20]

> Many of them cut off their fingers, some even blinded themselves to escape their miserable condition.

There were no safeguards available in the system against tyranny; even for a routine case a judge received huge bribes to relieve both the plaintiff and defendant. Baron Hugel States:[21]

> A Kashmiri would put up with any wrong rather than seek redress from his Sikh master, as he is invariably obliged to pay the judge a huge price for his decision, without the slightest prospect of recovering his lost property.

Thus, the Kashmiri spirit totally collapsed under the heavy burden of a burly administrative machine whose key objective was to look after the Punjabi elitist interests of augmenting fortunes by maximising revenue demands and taxes, and bullying all and sundry into paying bribes and *nazaranas*. Heavily burdened with a platoon of *maqdams*, *patwaris*, *tehsildars*, *shikdars* etc; this machine with these sharp edged mattocks shattered the confidence of the people; breaking their backbone by subjecting them to crippling extortions and, eventually, reducing them to abject penury and beggarly existence.

Even the bottom wrung of this system, comprising the Sikhs and the Kashmiri Pandits, acted as small despots, fleecing people day in and day out. They had grown rich enough to invest their surplus money in business to drive more profits and augment their wealth. Ganesh Lal, a contemporary writer, writes:[22]

> The chief revenue and judicial functions of the Kashmir Province are administered by a set of native Pandits who have grown rich at the expenses of the Mohammadans...

The poetry of the times also reflects the gruesome picture of this state of affairs. In his collection of poems (*Dewan*), Mujrim holds local officials responsible for the administrative chaos and identifies Tika Ram Bhan, Suraj Bhan, Ganesh Dhar, Kailash Dhar, Sat Ram Pandit, Himat Pandit Foetedar, Chandra Bhan Dogra and Deva Kak as the main culprits who played havoc with the Kashmiris.[23]

The contemporary writers are unanimous in their condemnation of the collection of extortionate *kharwars* in addition to the stipulated revenue from the peasants for whom the Sikh regime was synonymous with the hated *begar* and the worst kind of exploitation. The *kardars*, supervisors of harvest assessment, if found slightly sympathetic towards the plight of the peasants, were imprisoned and deprived of cash, jewellery, gold and silver. The Sikh regime was shrewd enough to prevent the creation of patron-client ties in the villages by rotating the officials rapidly, besides awarding punishments to mild-mannered functionaries. This was increasingly a viable policy to maximize the loyalty of the officials to the regime, and their commitment to the ideology of obedience. It made them capricious, oppressive, rude and haughty. Thus, devoid of human feelings, they showed least patience to listen to peasant grievances and joined hands with the top officials; *nazim, diwan, qiladar* etc; to do irreparable harm to Kashmir's economy, and inhibit the formation of rural alliance against the regime.

The vagaries of climate, recurrence of famines and other calamities further aggravated the crises; taking a heavy toll of life; rendering the survivors so hungry that they sold ' their sons and daughters' to fill up their empty bellies.[24] Many peasants, artisans, labourers and traders quit the Valley and 'gathered together in Amritsar in thousands and spread out to Delhi, Calcutta and Banaras'; reducing Kashmir to a barren land of hardly several lakhs; plummeting its population from eighty hundred thousand to two hundred thousand to bear the brunt of the Khakha-Bomba ravages.

Kashmir was, thus, socio-economically obliterated by the *Bebuj Raj* of the Sikhs which lasted for twenty seven years. For this the entire blame rests on Maharaja Ranjit Singh who was hand in glove with his provincial Governors to make the life of the people a misery. His attitude towards the Kashmiris was not paternalistic; in actuality it was that of a 'systemic grinder' whose intention was to suck their blood 'most mechanically' by denuding them of their resources and wealth apart from the exploitation of their labour power for taking out surplus in agriculture and industry. He let the Valley go to rack and ruin by changing it into a *Fauji Chawani* where thousands of 'stupid and brutal Sikhs' (laments Jacquemont), 'with swords at their side and pistols in their belt drew this ingenious and numerous people like a flock of sheep'. His political jealousy led him to create 'vexatious obstructions' in the way of their economic prosperity for he feared, to quote Vigne:

> The greater the prosperity of Kashmir the stronger would be inducement to invasion by the East India Company.

However, after the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839 A.D., the Sikhs sent their first Muslim Governor, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din who immediately reopened the *Jama Masjid*, closed since 1819 A.D., and installed a new *lingam* at Shankaracharya hill. He also issued Government grain at controlled prices.[26] But it was all too late; the Sikh rule was destined to perish soon by its own excesses and weaknesses.

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1) Vide Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Vol. 111, p. 180.
2) Mirjanpuri, *Tarikh-i-kashmir*; Moorcraft, Travels, II, p. 120.
3) Vide R.K. Parmu, *A History of Sikh Rule in Kashmir*, pp. 117-118.
4) *Ibid.*
5) Sohan Lal, *op.cit*, II, p. 261.
6) Vigne, *Travels*, II, p. 118; G.M. D.Sufi, *op.cit*, II, pp. 726, 730; R.K.Parmu, *op.cit*, pp. 119, 123, 165, 141-142; Lawrence, *op.cit*, p. 200.
7) For a critical assessment of the *Bebujnama*, see Abdul Ahad, *Bebujnama (Shahr-i-Napursan)*, *Shirza*, cultural Academy, Srinagar. Some Muslims of Hawal, Srinagar are said to have been burnt alive for cow slaughter. Vide Aslam Khan, *The Martial Spirit of Kashmiris*, p. 58.
8) Mirjanpuri, *op.cit*, p. 177.
9) Sohan Lal, *op.cit*, III, p. 116.
10) Besides bribes, they took 3000 or 4000 more in casual offerings and presents. Vigne, *Travels*.
11) (Birbal Kachru), *Majma-ut-Tawarikh*, f.1756 Mirjanpuri, *loc.cit*; Shan Lal, *op.cit*, II, p. 337; Narayan Dass Puri, *General Hari Singh Nalwa*, p. 53.
12) Jacquemont, *Letters From India*, II. pp. 58-59.
13) *Ibid*; pp. 75-76.
14) *Moorcroff, Travels, 11, P.126.*
15) *Ibid*, p. 124.
16) Vide Sohan Lal, *op.cit*, II, pp. 26, 261.
17) Moorcroft, Travels, II, pp. 293-294.
18) R.K. Parmu, *op.cit*, Appendix "E".
19) Major Leech's Report: F.S.C.(NAI) (c), 18 Nov. 1843. Nos. 13-17.
20) Birbal Kachru, *Majma-ut-Tawarikh*, f. 60.
21) Hugel, *Travels*, pp. 128-129.
22) Quoting specific instances, Ganesh Lal Writes:
    'At present Pandit Tilak is the treasurer and Mohan Kaul is incharge of the Revenue and Excise Departments. Pandit Raj Kak Dhar and Lachman Dhar are rich people and are engaged in contracts and commerce and drive profits; *Siyahat-i-Kashmir*, p. 32.
23) Mujrim's real name was Mirza Mohmad Mehdi.
24) See Khazir Shah's *Musnavi.* Also see Jacquemont, op.cit, II, p. 91; Sohan Lal, *op.cit*, II, p. 26.
25) For details see R.K. Parmu, *op.cit*, p. 257.
26) Vide *ibid*, pp. 211-212.

PART-IV

THE FOUNDING OF A STATE — THE DENIAL OF A LIVLIHOOD

A unique piece of terracotta tomb, depicting the tale of bitter centuries

The welding together of a bunch of unconnected and unrelated territories, inhabited by sharply contrasting ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities, by unconcerned peoples, into a new State of Jammu & Kashmir, for their own personal aggrandizement and profit, was a rare event that history has seldom witnessed.....a crucial factor .... that deprived the Kashmiris of their control on the means of production and subjected them to the new forces of coercion and Lord's extortions.

—Dr. Ahad

The king is avaricious....and he won't look beyond his money-bags. There is a capitation tax, on every individual practising any labour, trade, profession, or employment, collected daily.

—Hodson

....There seemed no way to live their [Kashmiri peasants] lives and sustain themselves except by the grace of God.

—Saif-ud-Din.

'He [Gulab Singh] takes most pleasure to *skin de men alive'* as a half scotch, half Sikh man told me; adding *'and dey likes it, and thinks it very proper'*. Still they don't like being fleeced as well as flayed

—Napier

Resorting to *beggar* thirty-four thousand men from Kashmir [were rounded up]...even conscripted children...

—Bawa Satinder Singh

The flames of tyranny rose to such heights that the wedding tax was increased from ten to one hundred rupees

—Mirjanpuri

To them [Kashmiri *shawl- bafs*] no other course seemed as a welcome relief from their suffering than to peel off their thumbs; a choice that disabled them from pursuing weaving...

— Dr. Ahad

THE WEDDING OF INCOMPATIBLE TERRITORIES — THE BIRTH OF J&K STATE

15

The welding together of a bunch of unconnected and unrelated territories, inhabited by sharply contrasting ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities, by unconcerned peoples, into a new State of Jammu and Kashmir, for their own aggrandizement and profit, was a rare event that history has seldom witnessed.

—Dr. Ahad

"In consideration of the services rendered by Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu to the State [Lahore *Darbar*] towards procuring the restoration of the relation of amity between the Lahore and British Governments, the Maharaja [Duleep Singh] hereby agrees to recognize the independent sovereignty of Raja Gulab Singh in such territories and districts in the hills as may be made over to the said Raja Gulab Singh by separate agreement between himself and the British Government with dependencies thereof which may have been in the Raja's possession since the time of Maharaja Kharak Singh; and the British Government, in consideration of the good conduct of Raja Gulab Singh, also agrees to recognize his independence in such territories and to admit him to the privilege of a separate Treaty with the British Government".

The carefully planned and self-explanatory contents of the Treaty of Lahore marked the beginning of well thought out, and mutually agreed Anglo-Sikh programme of the formation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir on which the signatories set their seal of approval on March 9, 1846 A.D.[1] But the formal State formation programme was put into effect with the ratification of a separate agreement, known as the Treaty of Amritsar that was signed between the British and Gulab Singh on March 16, 1846 A.D.[2]

The crucial feature, however, of both these Treaties was the collaboration of forces unconnected with Kashmir, who were commited, not to the well-being of the Kashmiris, but to promoting their own political, commercial and military dominance, for deliberating and deciding about the future of a nation completely scowled at and rejected as goods and chattels. Even the mighty Mughals; the ferocious Afghans and the despotic Sikhs had not dared to embark on their task of annexing Kashmir without the active support of the local people. But the Anglo-Sikh and the British-Dogra combine gave not least towards searching out the likes of Sheikh Yaqub Surfi, Baba Daud Khaki, Abdal Bhat, Muhmmad Bhat and Birbal Dhar — who had been instrumental in paving the way for the alien occupation of Kashmir — to legitimize and justify their endeavours of political hobnobbing and blackmailing.

Thus, the welding together of a bunch of unconnected and unrelated territories, inhabited by sharply contrasting ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities, by unconcerned peoples, into a new State of Jammu and Kashmir, for their own personal aggrandizement and profit, was a rare event that history has seldom witnessed. It was an extraordinary occurrence of weaving an unholy political, social and territorial alliance out of the dreams of uninvited aliens who invented a political chess-game of thought to, eventually, justify their illegitimate action and solace the helplessness and naivety of the natives. The ascendancy of these aliens had already taken a cultural as well as a political and economic form, and they had emerged as a dominant force in India to subvert the socio-economic order of many of its States by entangling them in a thorny bush of dissension and discord, and by convoluting plots with their local enemies. They had absorbed most of the Indian States to become a political suzerainty from a mere trading company, and had reached northern India to engage themselves in dismantling the Maratha power in order to establish their own paramountcy; the British paramount power which they successfully set on its legs to further spread its wings onto the surface of Afghanistan. But the Sikh Kingdom was a great stumbling block to setting their score with the Kabul Government. It had almost blocked the passage of its troops to Kabul where they had already installed their puppet, Shah Shuja as Amir in place of Dost Muhammad Khan.[3] The British impatience to find an easy solution to the Afghan problem and the Sikh obstinacy to refuse them a passage brought the two on the brink of hostilities which, eventually, culminated in the Anglo-Sikh war of 1845 A.D., in which the *Khalasa* army was defeated and the Lahore Government was compelled to offer Kashmir in part-exchange of war indemnity.

Before the first quarter of nineteenth century, the English East India Company had transformed itself into a most powerful political power of India. While other regions were relinquishing their sovereignty to the British, Punjab was emerging into a powerful Kingdom under an illiterate genious, Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Determined to reach his apogee, he did not think it advisable to come in the way of the British expansionism. Realizing the importance of rapidly expanding British influence and its possible consequences, Ranjit Singh decided to cultivate friendly relations with them.[4] He granted them numerous concessions; he abandoned his idea of conquering Sindh;[5] acknowledged the British maritime supremacy;[6] supported them both morally and materially in their occupation of Afghanistan.[7]

But the declining political effectiveness of Ranjit Singh's successors, and the increasing economic weakness of the Lahore Kingdom constantly preoccupied the *Khalasa* to even appreciate the growing political importance of the British. With the decline of the Sikh power, thus, began the decline of Anglo-Sikh relations. The inheritors of Ranjit Singh's throne failed to enjoy the British goodwill and fell from their favour when they came to be suspected of complicity in the Napalese-Sikh diplomatic hobnobbing, and when they showed lukewarm response to the British presence in Afghanistan.[8]

The Sikh attempts to block the passage of British troops to Kabul through Punjab further strengthened their anti-*Khalasa* feeling. The Sikh perverse contumacy, thus, drew the English towards contemplating the conquest of Punjab. Baylay, the president of the Company's Board of Control wrote to John Hobhouse: [9]

> Even if the holding of a force in Afghanistan should be necessary, we should find in the resources of the Punjab resources necessary for their maintenance; we could reinforce them without difficulty; and with Cashmir on our flank, the whole line of

> the Indus in our possession, we might defy all attacks whether from European or Asiatic enemies.

The British interest in the Punjab affairs was deeply whetted by the gradual decline of the Sikh power; by its decentralization and the rising influence of its local officials. But they were in no hurry to let their imperial intentions be known at this juncture; they guarded these against being suffused with delight while witnessing the *Khalasa* descending star. They adopted a wait-and-watch policy; carefully observing the activities of the feuding parties at the Lahore *Darbar*; waiting for an opportune time to strike.

The symptoms of the Sikh decline had appeared earlier when Maharaja Ranjit Singh was still in full command of the Punjab situation. But his resolve to rule effectively had begun to wither away with his ailing health when he looked worn out and helpless in face of new developments that engaged his imbecile successors in a fratricidal struggle for the *Khalasa* throne.[10] His leadership potential was gradually fading away; making him incessantly indecisive and victim of indignation at the sudden steep rise in the lusciousness of the Punjabi nobility. The growing discontent among the Sikh soldiery too had a perturbing influence on the Maharaja. The *Khalasa* Kingdom's outposts were simmering with the rage of hungry soldiers; they were preparing for a mutiny; their mutinous outburst was inevitable to disintegrate the Sikh power.[11] It was only a question of when.

The inevitable happened. The death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh unleashed a storm of pent-up resentment against the new Government; swallowing the entire Kingdom; prompting the British to win to their side as many feuding chiefs as they could, especially the Dogra brothers: Dhyan Singh and Gulab Singh, who were ruthlessly ambitious to dominate the politics of the Sikh State; an eventuality that was recognized to help them to establish a 'due control over their aggrandizements'.[12] The fluidity of the situation also prompted them to reinforce their military strength to be able to protect their interests and ensure their complete victory in the eventuality of a war with the *Khalasa*. They were harbouring a secret agenda of dismembering the Sikh State; even the promptitude shown by Sher Singh in sending the Sikh troops to escort the British army into the Khyber did not deter them from their resolve.[13]

There was no suitable occasion for the English to break their endurance than that of the Sikh army had a mutiny on their hands and when bitterly polarized Punjabi aristocracy had thrown the Lahore Government into complete disarray. Combined with this was the neo-rich Punjabi community 'prepared to go to the length of even sacrificing their independence and honour of their country'.[14] Moreover, the entire Sikh community was moving towards great shock and bitterness by witnessing the royal prestige coming under cloud as a result of scandalous relationship of their Maharani, Rani Jindan with her paramours (especially Lal Singh to mention only the key figure). Dwelling on the subject, Keightley writes: [15]

> The Ranee herself drank to such excess that her faculties began to be impaired and

> she was sinking into stupor; her lust also knew no bounds; Lal Singh, but not he alone, was her known paramour.

The Rani was even pregnant by Lal Singh. When she fell ill he was sternly warned by the *Darbar*:[16]

> If it appeared she were now with child and lost her life the Misser should be put to death.

Referring to the growing confusion at the Lahore *Darbar*, Lord Hardinge wrote: [17]

> ...The government of [the Sikhs] is carried on by a drunken prostitute [Rani Jindan]— her councillor— her paramour.... The treasury has in it we hear not more than 2 months pay.......When these means are at an end most of the army will become plunderers and robbers...

The situation was quite ripe to lure the British into an adventure to destroy the Sikh power. A powerful and energetic supporter was present and waiting to espouse their cause and ready to 'carry out to the uttermost whatever orders were given by the English Government'.[18] He was not a Punjabi; he was the Dogra *wazir* of the Sikh Kingdom, Gulab Singh who played a treacherous role of double-dealing. He secretly reached an understanding with the British, detrimental to the very Government he headed, and won their faith and confidence by causing 'disturbances in the whole Sikh Kingdom'. To Brigadier Wheeler he conveyed, through his messenger, that in the event of Anglo-Sikh war Gulab Singh 'wished to cast in his lot with the [British],' as his existence depended on their successes, and the pledge of this collaboration was reiterated. Broadfort reported:[19]

> He [Gulab Singh] wishes to cause disturbances in the whole Sikh Kingdom and he says he will carry out to the uttermost whatever orders may be given by the English Government.... If ordered he has force and will serve with life and property .... That the Jageerdars of the hills, those of Cashmeer, of Hazara....must be considered friends and servants of the English.

Simultaneously, Gulab Singh induced the Sikh *Panchayat* and the army to acknowledge him their leader and render him support against the British.[20] He stabbed the Sikhs in the back by his calculated duplicity which landed the contenders into the war field for a fierce fighting. Thus, by a rare display of docility and duplicity, Gulab Singh complicated the Anglo-Sikh relations to get embroiled in a war of far reaching consequences which, eventually, resulted in the partial dismemberment of the Sikh Kingdom and founding of a separate State of Jammu and Kashmir—comprising Kashmir, Jammu, Gilgit and Ladakh— as a reward to him in recognition of his services to the British during the confrontation.

In this war the Sikh army was routed and the dreams of their victory and prospect of booty — they were lured by the prospects of booty and opportunity of winning glory into the war[21]— were shattered by the political deception and trickery of their own Government, the naivety of their *Panchs* and the desertion from their chiefs, rather than the valour and superiority of the British forces. Even Lal Singh and Tej Singh, the most trusted confidants of Rani Jindan, deserted the Sikh cause by their unfailing cooperation with the British authorities.[22] While Tej Singh, the commander-in-chief, fled from the battle field and broke the bridge on the Sutlej, making the retreat of his army impossible, Lal Singh fled from the scene of action at Mudki to destroy the *Khalasa's* strength.[23] Gulab Singh took a series of steps to lower the Sikh morale; he disrupted the regular dispatch of food supplies to the Sutlej;[24] declined to send additional war material; replaced the Sikh soldiers with his own; treated well the captured British soldiers; tilted the balance of war in favour of the enemy in the battle of Sobroan; bringing, thus, total catastrophe to the Lahore Kingdom by his manoeuvres to circumvent the Punjabi determination to fight the war in which they had been involved emotionally by the promises of 'cash, ammunition and food'.[25]

Gulab Singh's duplicity did not stop there; it continued debilitating the political skill and manoeuvrability of the *Khalasa* not infrequently. To advance his own hidden agenda he once again deceived the Sikhs into suing for peace by ratiocinating the inevitability of their defeat, and the efficacy and profitability of a peaceful settlement of the dispute with the British. The stupefying stupidity of the *Khalasa-Darbar* combine, thus, let them fall in his trap. They entrusted him with the task of mediating a settlement and authorized him to the extent that they 'would agree to stand by any treaty he made even if by that treaty the city of Lahore was offered as a *peshkush'* [gift] to the English.[26] Having duped the Sikhs into the belief that he alone could save their nation from the inevitable doom, Gulab Singh set out to seek a compromise with the English.

The two sides met at Kasur and on 15th February 1846 A.D., Gulab Singh negotiated the terms with the political secretary privately. After reaching an understanding with the British, he succeeded in persuading the Sikh delegation, accompanying him on the occasion, to accede to all the demands of the English including; the payment of one and one-half crores of *rupees* in indemnity; the reduction of the Sikh army; the cession of territory between the Sutlej and Beas. But Kashmir did not figure in the proposed terms; its mention was tacitly and glibly omitted to thwart any possibility of the Sikh retaliation, the indication of which had come from an angry letter of Rani Jindan to Henry Lawrence with the warning that 'if Kashmir were given to Gulab Singh she will appeal directly to Queen Victoria'.[27]

Knowing well that the financial bankruptcy would fail *Khalasa* State to pay the huge amount of indemnity, the English decided to acquire Kashmir for Gulab Singh when circumstances favoured them to strike a hard bargain on it as compensation for the stipulated amount.[28] Their premonition did not betray them; things happened as they had desired; the Sikhs agreed to the British demands. The agreement was singed on March 9, 1846 A.D. The article 1V of the agreement, known as the Treaty of Lahore, stipulated to cede the entire hilly area between the Beas and the Indus in addition to Kashmir in compensation for the indemnity. But the British acquired Gulab Singh's territory merely on paper for the article X11 stated that he would be made independent ruler of 'such territories in the hills as may be made over to him by a separate agreement between himself and the British Government'.[29]

This separate agreement known as the Treaty of Amritsar was signed on March 16, 1846 A.D., just seven days after the ratification of the Treaty of Lahore. Dogra Raja, Gulab Singh was formally recognized as the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir by the article 1 of the Treaty which stated that the British Government: [30]

> Transfers and makes over for ever in independent possession to Maharaja Gulab Singh and the heirs male of his body all the hilly or mountainous country with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the River Ravi including Chamba and excluding Lahaul, being part of the territories ceded to the British by the Lahore State.....

This act of benevolence, and reward for his support thrilled the heart and soul of the new Maharaja with such excitement that he stood up to speak the truth; and with his folded hands and gushing gratitude to the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, he described himself as a '*zarkhareed*', a gold-boughten slave. But in consideration of this favour, the new Maharaja had to pay to the English 'the sum of seventy-five lakhs of *rupees* (*Nanakshahee*)'. And by another article, the British retained the suzerainty of the new State in their own hands.The article X stated: [32]

> Maharaja Gulab Singh acknowledges the supremacy of the British Government, and will in token of such supremacy, present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve perfect shawl goats of approved breed (six male, and six female), and three pairs of Cashmere shawls.

Gulab Singh was, thus, acknowledged as Maharaja merely in theory, but actually he was a British vassal; a faithful servant of *Sahibs* whose unflinching loyalty and regular payment of tribute they always appreciated and admired profusely. The *Time*, London Wrote: [33]

> ….. As a friend we may hope to find in him [Gulab Singh] a steady adherent of that qualified British ascendancy to which he owes his rise.

Gulab Singh was always 'eager to lick the dust before' the British feet. He showed readiness to rescue them from their declining coffers and the deficit of their treasury by accepting to pay them indemnity and tribute in exchange of the hilly areas in whose annexation they were not interested in face of the cost of management and occupation, besides their unproductiveness.The Governor-General, Lord Hardinge, considered:[34]

> The occupation of the whole of this territory was inadvisable as it would largely increase the extent of our frontier, and the military establishment for guarding it. The districts in question, with the exception of the comparatively small Valley of Kashmir, were for the most part unproductively and unlikely to pay the cost of occupation and management.

On the other hand, the ceded tract comprised the whole of the hereditary possessions of Gulab Singh, who being naturally eager to obtain an indefeasible title to them, came forward and offered to pay the war indemnity if constituted independent ruler of Jammu and Kashmir. It was recognized that the transfer of these two provinces of Gulab Singh would materially weaken the Sikh power, secure the war indemnity, and form a pleasing recompense to Gulab Singh, whom the British wished to reward for his conduct and services.

The reaction in London to these arrangements, made by Lord Hardinge, was quite encouraging. Peel informed him that there was 'universal approval and admiration of your policy from first to last'.[35]

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) See Appendix *"F"*.
2) *Ibid.*
3) See Bawa Satinder Singh, *The Jammu Fox*, p. 87.
4) J.D. Cunningham, *A History of The Sikhs*, pp. 384-385.
5) *Ibid*, pp. 389-392.
6) *Ibid.*
7) *Ibid*, pp. 395-400.
8) Waterfield to Auckland, Aug.7, 1840. Vide *The Jammu Fox*, p. 87.
9) *Ibid*, p. 88.
10) For details see Khuswant Singh, *A History Of The Sikhs; The Fall of The Kingdom Of The Punjab*; Ganda Singh, *Private Correspondence Relating To The Anglo-Sikh War.*
11) The Sikh soldiers earned little and their salaries were often in arrears. Sita Ram Kohli, *The Organization of The Khalsa Army*, pp. 67-85; J.D. Cunningham, *op.cit*, pp. 249-250.
12) Clerk to Maddaock, May.7, 1841, Vol. 151, no. 41; Henry Edward Fan, *Five Years in India*, I, p. 127.
13) Lushington to Auckland, June 5, 1841, Vol. 14.
14) Alfred Lyall, *British Dominion in India*, p. 315. For the caprice of the Sikh nobility see Hasrat, *op.cit*, p. 81.
15) Thomas Keightley, *A History Of India*, p. 194.
16) "Abstract of intelligence from the Punjab", *In Punjab on the Eve of First Sikh War*, p.30.
17) Hardinge to his step-son, Graham, Vol. 7. (Vide, *Jammu Fox*, p.100).
18) The entire correspondence of the period shows how Gulab Singh was always ready to comply fully with the directives of his British masters.
19) W. Broadfoot, *The Career Of Major George Broadfoot*, pp. 372-73. See Bawa Satinder Singh, *op.cit*, pp. 110-114.
20) See *ibid*, pp. 107-115.
21) *Ibid*, p. 107.
22) J.D. Cunningham, *op.cit*, p.304; J.T.Wheeler, *History of India*, pp. 596-597.
23) J.D. Cunningham, *op.cit*, pp. 304-309.
24) Wiiliam Edwards, *Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian*, p. 104.
25) J.D. Cunningham, *op.cit*; p. 328; Mohmad Latif, *History Of The Punjab*, pp. 541-543; *Time*, April, 1, 1846, p. 6.
26) Vide Bawa Satinder Singh, *op.cit*, p. 113.
27) Kripa Ram, *Gulab Nama*, p. 443.
28) Bawa Satinder Singh, *op.cit*, p. 116.

29) See Appendix *"F"*.
30) *Ibid*.
31) J.D. Cunningham, *op.cit*, p. 332 n.
32) See Appendix *"F"*.
33) *Ibid.*
34) *Ibid.*
35) *Ibid.*

THE RULE OF THUMB RULED THE ROOST

16

Gulab Singh can neither read nor write.

—Jacquemont

But [he was exceedingly intelligent] where his interest required he did not hesitate to resort to tricks and stratagems.

—Pannikar

To the ordinary observer, the policy of the Dogras would appear to have been parricidal, as well as fratricidal......

[But] in all their tortuous intrigue the common Dogra intent was undeviatingly pursued.

—C.Grey

Can't Kashmir be redeemed? The people are exclusively Musalmans; the ruler... an alien [Dogra].

—Aitchison

For his pro-British role, that ensured the English victory in face of hopeless odds, Gulab Singh deserved all that happened to him at the conclusion of the Anglo-Sikh Treaty. He was the most potential beneficiary of the special British dispensation and deservedly so because of his scrambling to get the best bargains, and his strict adherence to his double-dealing; a policy that suited him the most.

That a Dogra of a little consequence would one day 'climb the summit of a lofty mountain' and gain the 'desire of his heart' by carving out an 'independent' State for himself was not at all unimaginable.[1] Starting at 'daybreak' with unwavering determination and unyielding ambition, the sky-aspiring 'Jammu fox' pierced through the depths of the mountain to reach the summit, by sheer dint of his manoeuvrability. With his much bowing and scraping, he had earlier smartened himself up before going into his subservience to Maharaja Ranjit Singh's desires. He did not even hesitate to dress up, like a damsel, to kill the Maharaja's attention and excite his emotions and, thereby, prompt him to shower the handsome Dogra lad with wealth, gifts and favours.[2] Contemplating the Maharaja with the delight of his beauty, delicacy, black eyes and cut lips, he secured the employment of his brothers, Dhyan Singh and Suchet Singh, at the Lahore *Darbar*.[3] Their 'physique and poise', also 'made a deep impression on the Maharaja's mind' and as a result they climbed the ladder of great success. All the three Dogra brothers, thus, rose to their full height by exploiting their innate art of satiating the uncurbed 'profligate' desires of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Charles Masson writes:[4]

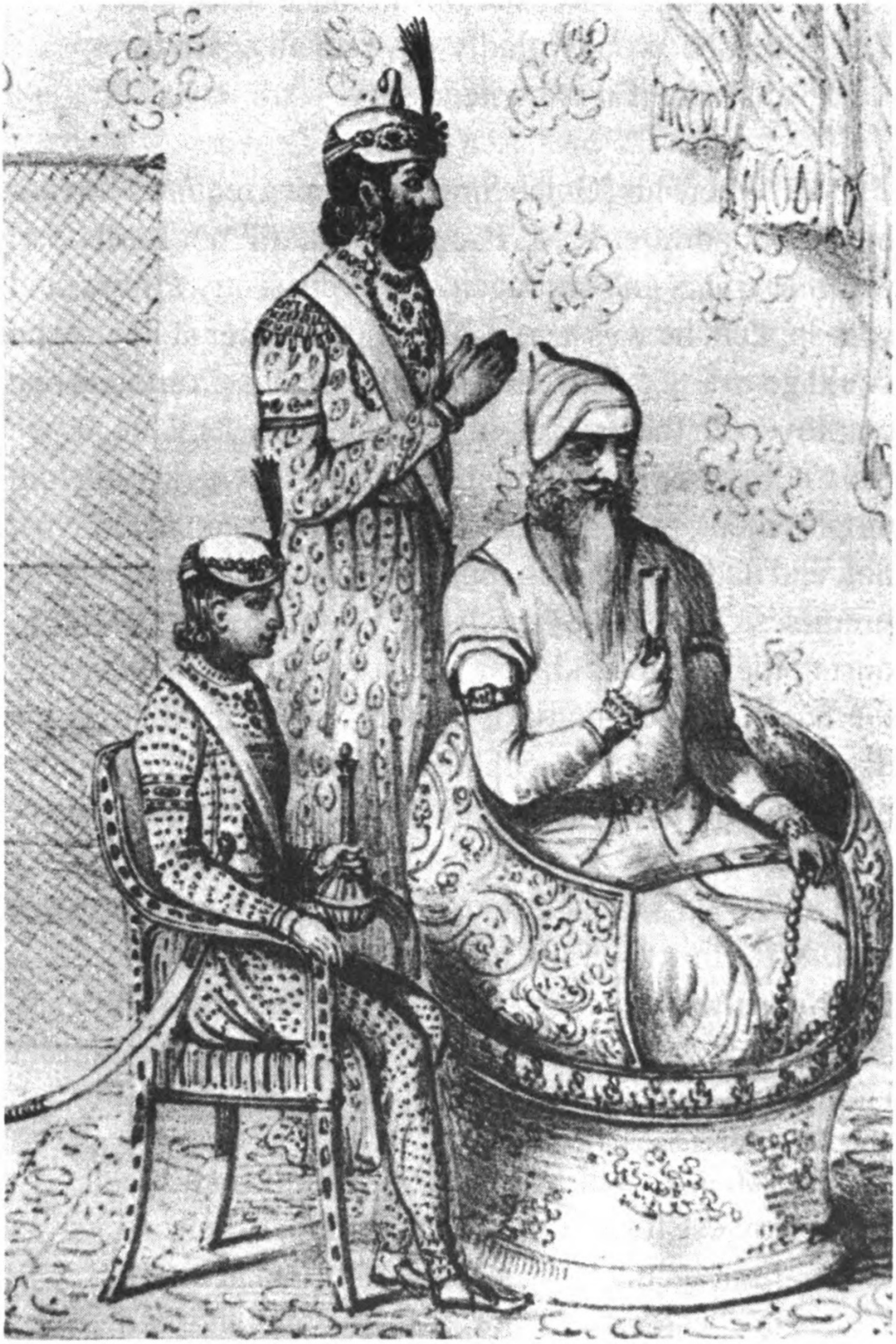
> [Dhyan Singh's] personal attractions pleased the Maharaja; and his subservience to his impure desires has affected his promotion.... and the advancement of his family.... Suchet Singh, it is asserted, was once as much a favourite of the Maharaja as his brothers.....

Even their progeny followed in their footsteps to gain in political strength and influence. The strikingly handsome Hira Singh, son of Dhyan Singh, abundantly bewitched Ranjit Singh with his beauty and charm and lured him into the trap of homosexuality. His readiness to satisfy Ranjit Singh's carnal desires secured him a special position in Lahore *Darbar*. To the discomfiture and embarrassment of many dignatories, he was, writes Griffin:[5]

> Allowed a chair in the [Maharaja's] presence when all others.... were compelled to stand. Without him he never went out to take the air.

Born, in 1792 A.D., in a family of doubtful 'legitimacy'[6], Gulab Singh or Goolanloo, could 'neither read nof write;[7] but he was intelligent enough to learn the art of soldiery and develop a tricky character. He was very adaptable and quick to adjust himself to the changes in the political environment to find a niche in the career market. He entered the services of Lahore *Darbar* in 1809A.D., and within a short span of time rose to the position of a vassal chief and the Raja.[8] Being the major beneficiary of the royal patronage and worldly favours, Gulab Singh often knelt at Maharaja Ranjit Singh's feet and expressed his gratitude with humility. Vigne writes:[9]

> [Gulab Singh said that] he was once only a poor soldier and was ready at the Maharaja's bidding to become so again—that all he possessed was owing to the bounty and kindness of his master, who had raised him



Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Hira Singh
&
Dhyan Singh

> from the low station he once held, and that he would gladly give up all again for his sake if it were necessary.

'Where his [Gulab Singh's] interest required', writes his ardent admire, K.M. Pannikar, 'he did not hesitate to resort to tricks and stratagems'.[10] Apparently affable and soft-spoken, he was a cold-blooded schemer at heart who could go to any extent, to even stabbing his promoters and employers in the back, to attain his own ends.[11] He, as we have noted, betrayed the same *Darbar* that had given him employment, patronage, strength, power, status and what not, and had reposed too much trust and confidence in his promises. The shabby tricks he played on the *Khalasa*, during the Anglo-Sikh war and at the time of negotiating the terms of the Treaty of Lahore which resulted in the dismemberment of the Sikh Kingdom, made him a rather dubious character; a savage tormentor of the Punjabi psyche.[12]

But all said and done, Gulab Singh was the most successful Indian of his times who duped both the Sikhs and the British into carving out a State for himself which survived for over a century. General Charles Napier laments, thus: [13]

> What a king to install! Raising from the lowest foulest sediment of debauchery to float on the highest surge of blood he lifted his besmeared front, and England adorned it with a crown.

Though the Treaty of Amritsar made him the

Maharaja of a new State of Jammu&Kashmir, Gulab Singh did not get its actual possession without encountering difficulties and stiff local opposition which he was able to overcome only with the active support of his British masters. Neither the people nor the local authorities were prepared to welcome his regime in Kashmir owing to his nasty behaviour and posturing during his Ladakh campaigns conducted to gain control over its lucrative *pashm* trade; the lifeline for the famous shawl industry of Kashmir.[14] These campaigns had completely strangulated the shawl industry by diverting the supply of *pashm* to Jammu via Wardwun and Kishtwar and had rendered the weavers jobless; making them, eventually, hostile to his occupation of Kashmir.[15] Besides, these campaigns had closely involved the Kashmir authorities in making possible regular supply of necessaries for the Dogra troops stationed at Ladakh by engaging the Kashmiri porters in *begar*. The consequent absence of these porters from their homes resulted in badly affecting agriculture and industry, thus, leaving their families high and dry and completely destitute.[16] Also , in the inauguration of the Hindu 'Maharaja's' rule, they feared the recrudescence of what they had suffered during the Sikh rule (barring the Governorship of Sheikh Mohi-ud-Din and Sheikh Imam-ud-Din): mosque closures; proscription of *azan* (call for prayers); death-warrant for cow-slaughter; imposition of *zar-i-nikah* (marriage tax); Muslim migrations etc.[17]

Feeling, thus, apprehensive about these adverse results and the consequent extinction of their socio-religious identity under the Dogra regime, the Kashmiris sent *urzies* or petitions to the British; imploring them not to give Kashmir to Gulab Singh.[18] Their petitions evoked some response from a section of high ranking British officials who condemned their own Government's decision of installing Gulab singh as the 'Maharaja'; and forcefully advocated his immediate ouster. Charles Napier wrote: [19]

> In the first we admit folly in supporting a man we have not force to put in of what he has paid us for. We shall then be in a false position, cramming down the throats of the Cashmerian people a hated and hateful villain.....

He even pleaded for Kashmir's merger with the British dominions which he contemplated a viable economic option for enhancing the Company's revenues and winning the Kashmiri loyalty. Rationalizing this, he wrote: [20]

> It is almost certain that I could take steamer into the heart of Cashmere, and form magazines at Mazafurabad. We could then, early in the spring run into Baramulla when the job would be done. And when Cashmere was ours, a dozen good officers spread through the Valleys, doing justice vigorously and protecting the ryots and manufacturers, would in three months make the grand Valley of Cashmere devoted to us and in a year or two, a happy people would pay 50 lacs a year in money and kind.

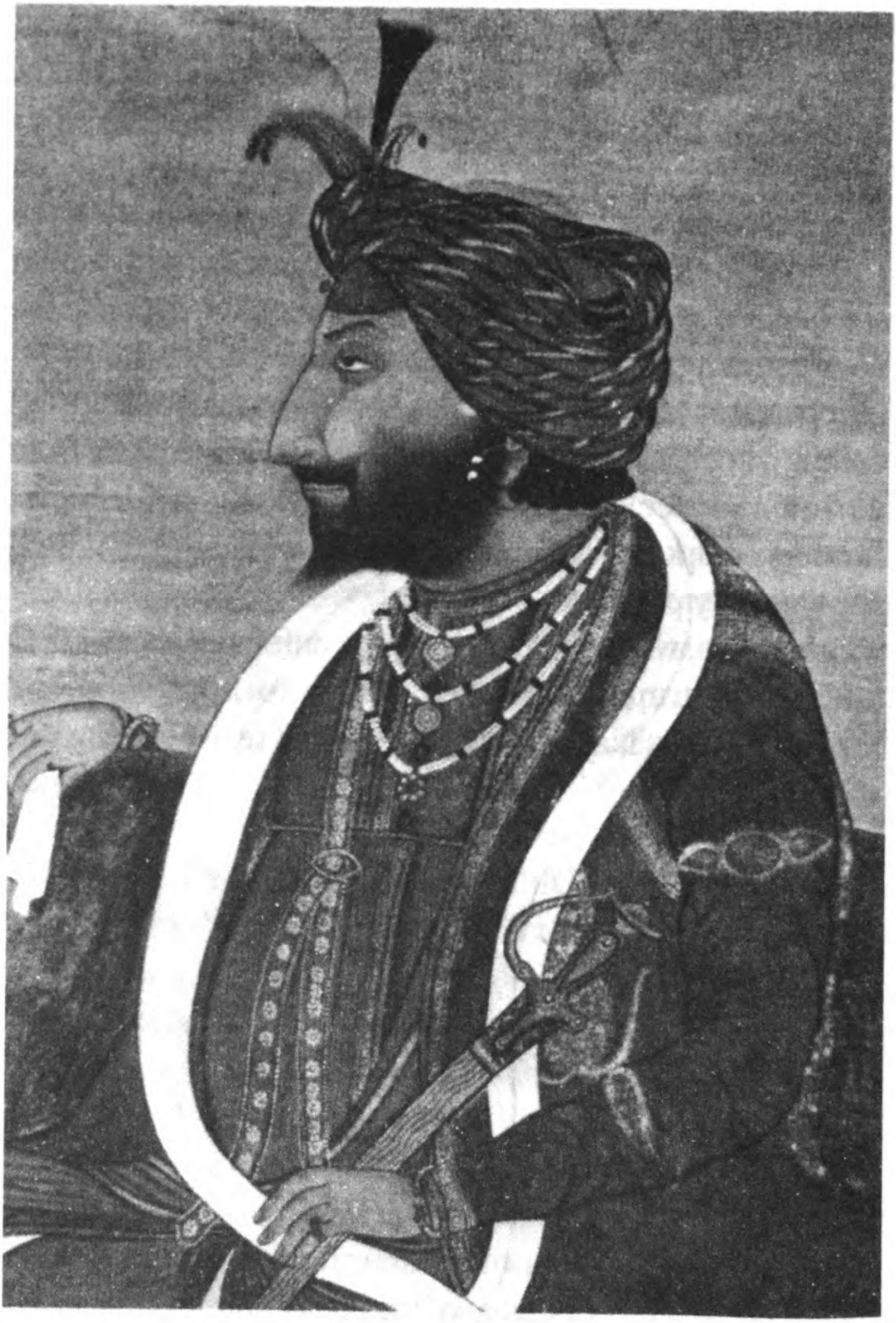
A mass resistance headed by the Kashmir

authorities and supported by a section of the British was, thus, waiting to prevent the Dogra bid to occupy Kashmir. In building up the tempo of this opposition, the 'domineering', attractive, proud and haughty wife of Sheikh Imam-ud-Din played a significant role.[21] Repudiating the Amritsar Treaty, she mobilized the hill chiefs (with whom she had blood relation) and the local people to oppose the new development. Determined to secure to Kashmir an independent Muslim rule under her own sophisticated and cultured husband, she succeeded in garnering support from various sources; Khakha-Bomba tribes; hill-chiefs; farmers; workers; artisans and *shawl-bafs* among whom she was very popular.

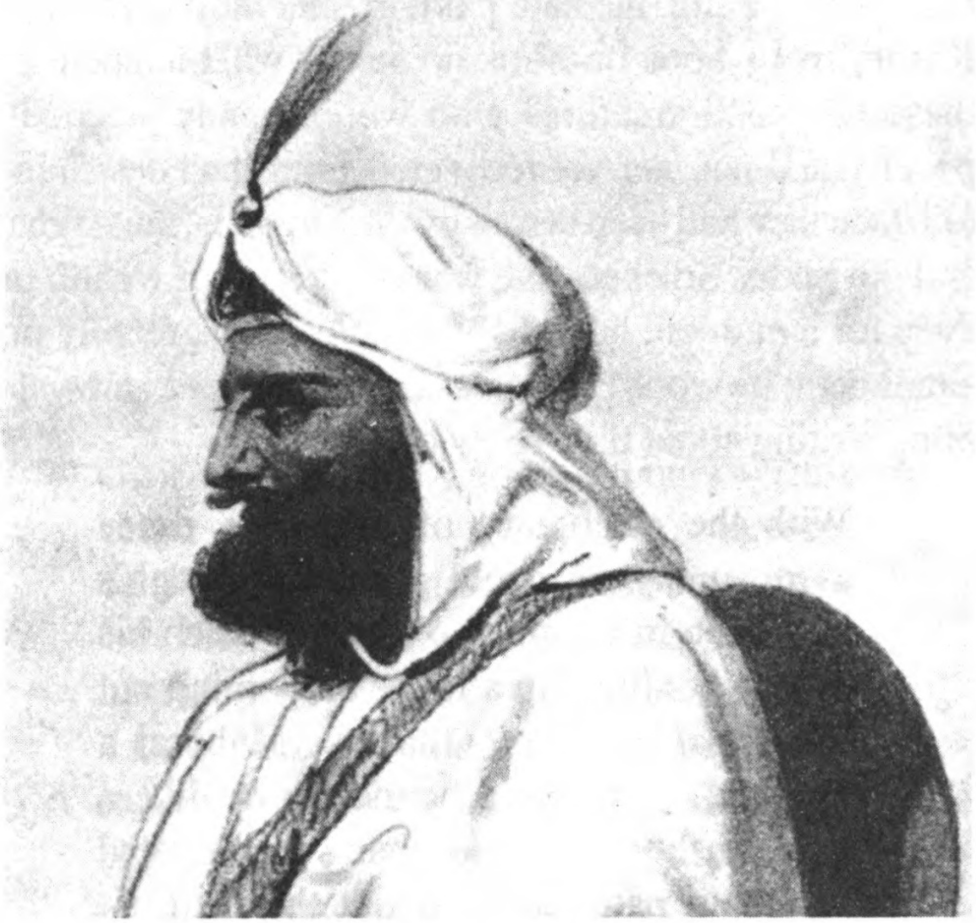
Thus, when the Dogra troops entered Kashmir they faced stiff armed resistance which so impressed and thrilled Charles Napier that he could not resist writing this song: [22]

Oh! Goolab Singh
We made you King
All our of moderation!
But says Cashmere,
You shan't come here,
And all is botheration!
Oh! Lord Hardinge,
You made me king,
For a con-sid-eration!
Now give me back
Some hundred lacs
Paid for your moderation......

But the Kashmiri resistance movement was quelled



1. Maharaja Gulab Singh



2. Sheikh Imam -ud-Din

with the British support; making possible Gulab Singh's take-over of Kashmir on November 9, 1846 A.D.; and ushering in a political change that, eventually, vindicated the Kashmiri suspicions.

The new 'Maharaja' began his rule with a heavy hand and without least amount of regard to cannons of administration, and surpassed the Sikhs in oppression, tyranny and exploitation. He was determined to recover the huge amount, he had paid in indemnity, from the Kashmiris by hook or crook no matter what happened to these wretched creatures who were already steeped in poverty and had not yet recovered from their desperation to which they had been driven by the Mughals, the Afghans and the Sikhs. So excessive was his desire for wealth that even for a moment he did not miss looking greedily on a small coin; he would pocket as little as a *rupee* in front of him. Writing about this, Drew observes:[23]

> With the customary offering of a rupee as *nazar* anyone could get Gulab Singh's ear. Even in a crowd, one could catch his eye by holding up a rupee and crying out '*Maharaj aarz hai*', that is, 'Maharaj a petition'. He would pounce down like a hawk on the money and having appropriated it, would patiently hear out the petition. Once a man, after this fashion making a complaint when the Maharaja was taking the rupee, closed his hand on it and said, 'no; first hear what I have to say'. Even this did not go beyond Gulab Singh's patience. He waited till the fellow had told his tale and opened his hand.

> Then taking the money, he gave orders about the case.

Not looking 'beyond his money-bags', the Maharaja frequently indulged in private trading and mercantile dealings at an enormous profit; giving a hoot to his royal prestige and decorum. He would wring fifty percent of the harvest out of the farmers and sell the same at double of its price, he retained an absolute monopoly on the sale of *shali*, the staple produce of the Valley.[24] The tax on *singhara* was also raised; its annual assessment amounted to hundred thousand *rupees*. Taxes were collected, almost on daily basis, from every Kashmiri no matter what profession he practised. A poll-tax of, from Company's *rupees* 16 to 22, was levied on every tradesman including:[25]

> Grocers - bakers - green-grocers - fruit sellers - drapers - money changers - confectioners – saddlers - arms burnishers - washermen - dyers - stone-cutters - hired labourers - boatmen - woodsellers- potters - shoemakers - chintzmakers - butchers - milkmen - leech - rope-makers -seal engravers - papier- machie makers - cleaned-wool-sellers - druggists - silver-smiths - tape-makers - cotton-weavers - carriers.

Herbert Edwardes writes:[26]

> Every living man is to [Gulab Singh] a

> blade of golden corn, which he will
> never leave till he has gathered, and
> threshed, and winnowed, and garnered.

Nor did Gulab Singh spare the grave diggers, the *shawl-bafs,* gamblers, prostitutes and scavengers. He even taxed the dried cowdung. Khalil Mirjanpri laments:[27]

> In the extortion of money he used a hundred
> arts and opened new doors of tyranny......

Intensifying his rapacious economic programme, Gulab Singh, the money-grubber, drastically raised *zari-nikah*; bringing further disrepute to his regime. Khalil Mirjanpuri writes:[28]

> The flames of tyranny rose to such heights
> that the wedding tax was increased from ten
> to one hundred rupees.

Resorting to the practice of *begar*, the Maharaja did not even spare children. He rounded up thousands of Kashmiris for carrying ammunition to Chilas.[29] Generally he resorted to this practice on Fridays when a large number of Muslims from all over the Valley gathered at the *Jama Masjid* for prayers;[30] making it easy for the 'ruffian' ruler to rope them into the servile *begar*. To avoid this oppression, and heavy taxation many Kashmiris fled the country. Among these a large number consisted of the *shawl-bafs* who were seen in thousands in Simla and Punjab by most of the nineteenth century European visitors to Kashmir. On realizing the extent of damage done to the shawl industry by the unending migration of the weavers, the Maharaja banned it under stringent regulations which tightened up the noose round the neck of the *shawl-bafs*, the real money-spinners for the Dogra regime.[31]

Apart from his undimnishing desire for self-enrichment and out of control grubbing for money, the Maharaja reflected his growing dislike for the Muslims of the Valley by initiating some administrative cleansing measures. He closed the doors of administration to the Muslims and discharged those already working in some departments. Also he confiscated a large number of tax-free *jagirs*, including those of the Muslim *peers*, and burnt the houses of the Muslims convicted of cow-slaughter. Frequent cutting off noses and ears of cow-killers presented horrible sight.

Alongside the communal dimension, the Maharaja's policy had a regional bias that created a sharp divide between the Kashmiris and the Dogras which continues unabated till this day. He gave important posts to the Dogras to weaken the influence of the Kashmiri Pandits especially in the revenue administration. While appointing Devi Ditta Mal as special revenue officer, he issued these instructions: [32]

> Now you [Devi Ditta] should collect revenue from every quarter and root out Kashmiri influence from every quarter.

The royal advice had a desired effect; it percolated through the entire Valley to inspire officials to work in keeping with the spirit of these instructions, and oppress the Kashmiris accordingly. And when the Kashmiris protested/complained bitterly about the Dogra high handedness and their anti-Kashmiri attitude, the

Maharaja publicly rebuked them by accusing them of nurturing ill-feelings and grudge against the Dogras.[33]

By initiating these measures, which had both communal and regional bias, Maharaja Gulab Singh made critical errors that aroused the Kashmiri sentiment for quite some time. About eight hundred Kashmiris assembled to express their protest, against the rule of thumb that ruled the roost in Kashmir, in a manner that was different from the earlier protest and wide spread uproar held in retaliation to Gulab Singh's taxation policy. This protest did not create that much stirrings in the echelons of power as the earlier ones had done when the shopkeepers observed complete *hartal* and the *karkhanadars* closed their factories and the workers joined the protest.

The Hindu-Muslim cleavage and the Kashmiri-Jammu divide further deepened during the reign of Maharaja Gulab Singh's successors, when the Kashmiris received a raw deal at the hands of their non-Kashmiri and non-Muslim masters and when the Kashmiri culture began to lose its sheen and shuffle awkwardly and unpleasantly owing to its gradual tailoring to suit the Dogra revenue programme. In its hot pursuit of money-making, the Dogra regime exhibited gross indecency and made an awful social mess by nurturing a culture of ribaldry, and institutionalizing prostitution, sale of girls and white slave trade. It built-up a platoon of prostitutes to augument the State's income. The number of the licensed prostitutes, eventually, rose to 18,715. They contributed from 15 to 25 percent of the total revenue of the Dogra rulers; the license granting permission for the purchase of a girl cost about 100 *Chilkee rupees* in Maharaja Ranbir Singh's time.[34]

The licensed prostitution carried through brothels, established at Maisuma and Tashwan in Srinagar, became a major source of social anxiety and unhealthy climate that, eventually, promoted syphilitic and venereal diseases throughout the Valley. During 1877-1879 A.D., the number of prostitutes detected with syphilitic disease was 12,977 and of these 2,516 were having venereal disease.[35] Besides, these prostitutes continually disturbed the people in the neighbourhood at night by the ribald songs accompanied by different musical instruments. But what really disturbed the people, writes Biscoe:[36]

> Were the cries of anguish from the unfortunates, recently forced into this cruel life, many of them quite young, who had been sold by their relations under the pretence that marriages had been arranged for them?

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) "He, who wishes to climb to the summit of a lofty mountain, must start at day break. Should he delay, night may close over him era he has gained the desire of his heart. The treasure which is buried in the depths of the mountain will become the prize of that man who is the first to reach its summit". Lake to Mill, Jan.15, 1846, Vol. 103, enc.2. Letter 3.
2) There is hardly any contemporary writer who does not allude to Maharaja Ranjit Singh's love for wine, women and homosexuality. Gulab Singh exploited Maharaja's weakness to the hilt to his own advantage.
3) The phenomenal rise of the Dogra brothers is attributed to Ranjit Singh's profligate desires and homosexuality. See G. Gurmichael Smyth, *A History of The Reigning Family of Lahore*, p. 99; Charless Masson, *Narrative of Various Journey's in Blochistan, Afganistan, and the Punjab*, I, p. 441.
4) *Ibid.*
5) Griffin, *Punjab Chiefs*, p. 323.
6) J.D. Cunningham, *op.cit*, p. 189. Vigne claimed that Gulab Singh's family was "despised by the lovers of legitimacy". *Travels*, p. 254.
7) Jacquemont, *op.cit*, pp. 2, 9; G.M.D. Sufi, *op.cit*, II, p. 758.
8) For details see, K.M. Pannikar, *Founding of the Kashmir State*, pp. 25, 31-32, 34, 157.
9) G.T.Vigne, *Travels*, II, p. 374.
10) K.M. Pannikar, *loc.cit;* p.152.
11) In the accumulation of wealth Gulab Singh exercised much oppression. J.D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 332.
12) See chapter, The *Wedding of Incompatible Territories.*
13) W. Napier, *Life of Charles Napier*, III, p. 391.
14) According to Khushwant Singh: "Gulab Singh wanted to extend his boundaries to Ladakh and beyond partly to control the *pashmina* trade which brought in large revenues and partly because Rohtak in Garo was reputed to be rich in gold, borax, sulphur and rock salt and had a thriving market which attracted traders from all over Central Asia". Khushwant Singh, *A History of The Sikhs*, p. 21. For Gulab Singh's Ladakh campaigns see Abdul Ahad, *Kashmir to Frankfurt*, pp. 20-21 & notes.
15) Abdul Ahad, *ibid.*
16) Robert Thorp, *Cashmere Misgovernment* (Kashmir Papers), p.74; E.F. Knight, *Where Three Empires Meet*, pp. 69-70; Research Biannual, Vol.I, No. 11, 1976, pp. 58-71.

17) See chapter, The *Bebuj Raj – The Brazen Savagery.*
18) Abdul Ahad, *loc.cit*, Appendix "E". (I) & "E" (ii).
19) W. Napier, *op.cit*, III, p. 458.
20) *Ibid*, pp. 469-470.
21) See *Calcutta Review*, July, 1847; Edwards and Marivale, *Life of Sir Henry Hardinge*, II, p. 72.
22) W. Napier, *op.cit*, III, p. 459.
23) Quoted by P.N.K. Bamzai, *Socio-Economic History of Kashmir*, p. 44.
24) Bawa Satindar Singh, *Jammu Fox*, p.169.
25) F.Sec. (NAI) 131, March, 1848, No: 66-70.
26) Quoted by Bawa Satindar Singh, *loc.cit*, p. 166.
27) Mirjanpuri, *Tarikh-e-Kashmir*, p.331
28) *Ibid.*
29) Bawa Satindar Singh, *loc.cit*, p.174.
30) *Ibid.*
31) Abdul Ahad, *Kashmir to Frankfurt.*
32) Bawa Satindar Singh, *loc.cit*, p.171.
33) *Ibid.*
34) *Cashmere Misgovernment* (typed copy) chapt. IV, p. 35.
35) F.Sec, E, (NAI) March, 1883, No. 86.
36) Biscoe, *Autobiography*, pp. 259-260.

THE SERVANTS OF SAHIBS

17

Gulab Singh has hitherto been eager to lick the dust below my feet.

—Dalhousie

.... [Gulab Singh] caught my dress in his hands, and cried aloud, "thus I grasp the skirts of the British Government, and I will never let go my hold."

—Dalhousie

If the whole surface of the earth were to become paper, the trees pens, and the rivers turn into ink, they would all be insufficient to express my unbounded pleasure. It is well known that I owe to the British Government the preservation of my life, my country and everything that I have; and it may well be said of this your humble friend that you have performed the miracle of Christ in raising me from the dead.

—Gulab Singh

Gulab Singh was not coaxing or cajoling the British when he, unlike a typical enlightened oriental despot, described himself as their '*zarkhareed*'.[1] He was speaking, though in a beautifully and politely-phrased manner, the truth that he was their slave boughten by gold (Kashmir). He was revealing the actual fact that his Kashmir Kingdom was their creation, and was unambiguously expressing his preparedness to abide by the English dictates in the management of the public affairs of the new State. The articles (1V to X) of the Treaty of Amritsar also made it glaringly obvious that Gulab Singh was a 'Maharaja' on paper only. So were his successors; Ranbir Singh, Partap Singh and Hari Singh whose puppet Government's atrocities the Kashmiri masses had to endure for about a century till they decided to change their plight only to be landed in the wilderness of confusion and desperation which has; made their future uncertain; bedevilled their intercommunal and interregional relations with antagonism; and embroiled India and Pakistan in a long and bitter conflict since 1947.

Before proclaiming himself as the 'Maharaja', Gulab Singh reiterated his commitment to follow what the British deemed advisable in the circumstances prevailing in the Valley. The piercing sound of this commitment reverberated from *Jama Masjid* when the 'Maharaja's proclamation was read in presence of Gulab Singh and Lawrence;[2] emphasizing that he would: make no discrimination on the basis of religion and region; abolish the custom of *sati* and infanticide; give up his personal mercantile dealings. But in course of time, his words rang hollow and played hoax on the Kashmiris, as noted earlier.

It would be foolish to condemn the British senior most officials, who had opposed their Government for giving Kashmir to Gulab Singh, for their disapprobation of the Dogra anti-Kashmiri policies. Equally unjustified would be to construe their exhortations, which evoked zero response, as unfair interference in Gulab Singh's internal matters. The British persuasion of the Dogra ruler to reduce the prices of *shali*, *singhara* and other essential commodities; and to look with equal favour on Hindus and

Muslims, Kashmiris and Dogras; and introduce reforms in administration did not tantamount to interference. These concerns of the English had neither any political dimension nor expansionist angle; these were based on humanitarian considerations and the agreement reached with Gulab Singh before his assuming the office of the Maharaja of Kashmir.[3] He was severely condemned for his failure to dispense justice to the Kashmiris. Herbert Edwards described him:[4]

> The worst native I have ever come in contact with, a bad king, a miser, and a liar.

Even his ardent supporter Lawrence (who believed that the Dogra takeover would be hailed as a "welcome deliverance from the government of the Sikhs") did not spare him for his failure to fulfil his earlier commitments and exhorted him to improve the lot of his subjects. He told Gulab Singh that:[5]

> If I heard that his subjects were happy and his chiefs and army contented, [then] I too should be satisfied.

Agitations launched by the Kashmiri shopkeepers, *shawl-bafs*, farmers and merchants against Gulab Singh's taxation policy did not escape the attention of the English who, therefore, made every effort to bring a change in the situation. But the cunning 'Maharaja' always duped them into believing that the Kashmiris were content with his rule. Hassan Khuihami writes :[6]

> In 1847A.D., Mr. Taylor Sahib came to Kashmir to inquire into the conditions in

> Kashmir and to suggest reforms in the Maharaja's administration….. He called a general *Darbar* in the Maisuma grounds, and in a very loud voice he inquired 'o you! the people of Kashmir, are you happy with the Maharaja's rule or not?' Some of the people, who had been tutored by Pandit Rajkak, shouted back, "yes, we are."

It was Gulab Singh's astute move to play the British false and keep them in good humour by extending assurances that their concerns had already been looked into. During Lawrence's Kashmir sojourn, Gulab Singh made it sure enough that no Kashmiri called upon the *Sahib Bahadur* to expose the Dogra machinations.[7] But the British were determined to ascertain the truth. Their inquiries revealed that there was not a word of truth in what the Maharaja was clangouring. They warned him: [8]

> In no case will the British Government be the blind instrument of a Ruler's injustice towards his people and if inspite of friendly warnings, the evil of which the British Government may have just cause to complain be not corrected, a system of direct interference must be resorted to, which as your Highness must be aware would lower the dignity and curtail the independence of the Ruler.

In 1851A.D., the British appointed an officer-on-special-duty ostensibly for looking after the interests of

European visitors who had begun visiting the Valley in large numbers. Regarding this development, the British Government wrote:[9]

> In consequence of misconduct of certain officers who visited Cashmere during the last season, we have assented to the recommendation of the Board for deputing Major Macgregor to that place during the present season to be a referee in any misunderstanding that may arise between the authorities of that country and the British officers and to take cognizance of any charges of oppression or irregularity which may be brought against our officers.

The appointment of the officer-on-special-duty was a prelude to the Kashmir Residency and other related developments which extended the British influence far beyond their boarders in subsequent years. But the British were essentially gradualists. They moved slowly and by degrees and broadened their net step by step. Maharaja Ranbir Singh's (the successor of Gulab Singh) reign, which commenced in 1857 A.D., provided them with all that they required to widen the sphere of their influence. His misrule emboldened them to spread the tentacles of their bureaucracy in Kashmir, especially when he failed to deal effectively with the abnormal situation created by the natural calamities that befell the Kashmiris during 1878-79A.D. Writing about the effects of the awful famine, Walter Lawrence remarked:[10]

> When I commenced the work of inspecting villages in 1889 there was hardly a village where I did not see deserted houses and abandoned fields, the owners of which had perished in the great famine of 1878. ....There was enormous loss of life. One authority has stated that the population of Srinagar was reduced from 127,400 to 00,000 and others say that of the total population of the Valley only two-fifths survived.

The callous official disregard for human sufferings complicated the situation. Notoriously inefficient, corrupt and oppressive, the State Government was accused of having drowned the worst hit famine victims of Kashmir by boatloads in the Wular (a famous lake) in order to save the expenses of feeding them during the famine.[11]

Walter Lawrence writes: [12]

> Years have now passed since the last famine, but the Kashmiri proverb '*Drag tsalih ta dag tasalih na'*, which means that 'the famine goes but its stains remain', is true in all senses.

Besides, the Maharaja's pretensions of loyalty had already come under the British suspicion when in 1865 A.D., he commenced his Trans-Himalayan campaigns, resulting in his occupation of Shadula across the Karakoram.[13] His systematic exploration of the vast regions of Central Asia and Persia, and his increasing contacts with the Russians[14] led them into believing that he was, in a blatant contravention of the Treaty of Amritsar, pursuing an independent foreign policy for which Kashmir's geography presented plenty of scope.

As a meeting place of the three great Empires of the East—the British, the Russian, and the Chinese—and in close proximity of Afghanistan, Kashmir was "the sentry State"[15] for the British Indian Empire which could not afford to see the Maharaja doing what might have unpleasant consequences for it. The British perception of the Maharaja's lurching along a hostile cliff was constantly strengthening, making it necessary for them to consider steps for safeguarding their interests against a possible disaster from across the North West Frontier. For them the situation was grave. It engaged their wholesome attention and thorough consideration which, eventually, resulted in the evolution of the strategy of watch mechanism as a wisest course of action to deal with. The appointment of trusted agents at strategically important places as the British watchdogs became, thus, absolutely imperative to:

1. discourage the Maharaja from cultivating relations with the Russians;
2. guage the strength and direction of the Tsarist moves;
3. asses the possibilities of subversion from northern Afghanistan and Chinese Turkistan; and
4. forewarn the British Indian Government of possible dangers so

> that it was well prepared to counter these well in time.

The British sent Mr. Drew to Ladakh in 1870 A.D., as their representative to fulfil these functions. In 1877 A.D., an Agent was also stationed in Gilgit. But it was not thought fit yet to establish a Residency in Kashmir which they had already planned as: [16]

> A measure which may be called for, not merely by the need for assisting and supervising administrative reforms, but also by the increasing importance to the Government of India of watching events beyond the North Western Frontiers of Kashmir.

The British were waiting for an opportune time to widen the powers of the officer-on-special-duty appointed in 1851A.D. Lord Ripon made it clear when he wrote to the Secretary of State: [17]

> The British did not take the action earlier conceiving that a favourable opportunity would present itself on the occurrence of a fresh succession — an event which seemed unlikely to be long postponed. When that event takes place we consider that it will be our duty to impress upon the Cashmere Government its obligations to its own subjects and to see that the reforms which are so urgently needed are no longer postponed.

This opportunity was provided by Maharaja Pratap Singh; when he aroused suspicion of his complicity in treasonable correspondence with Russia as well as with the deposed Sikh Maharaja, Duleep Singh;[18] when his corrupt administration attracted considerable criticism and adverse press comments both in India and abroad; when his imbecility convinced the British that the Northern Frontier was too serious a matter to be entrusted to him.[19] The special officer, thus, became the British Resident in Kashmir in 1888 A.D., when the time was ripe.

The Kashmir Residency was manned by an officer 'with the same position and duties as Political Residents in other native States in subordinate alliances with the British Government'.[20] Converting Kashmir into a Princely State, the Residency commenced a new era of the British hegemony that took its wings with the active support of Maharaja Pratap Singh's nearest and dearest.[21] As faithful servants of *Sahibs*, these close relations (brothers) of the Maharaja, (namely) Raja Amar Singh and Raja Ram Singh, left no stone unturned in ensuring the successful implementation of the British programme which manifested itself in the exclusion of the 'Maharaj...... from all interference with public affairs', and in seeking his resignation and abdication in favour of a Council of State, consisting of his 'brothers and certain selected native officials in the British service' with 'full powers subject to the condition that.... no important step' was taken 'without consulting the Resident, and that they' would 'act upon the Resident's advice' whenever offered.[22]

While accepting the arrangement, the Viceroy said:[23]

Notwithstanding the ample resources of

> your State, your treasury was empty; corruption and disorder prevailing in every department and every office; your Highness was still surrounded by low and unworthy favourites and the continued misgovernment of your State was becoming, every day, a more serious source of anxiety.

But the Maharaja described the arrangement as a handiwork of his brothers and expressed his obvious discomfiture when he wrote to the Viceroy: [24]

> If his brothers were determined to ruin him with false accusations he would submit to his fate. His Highness did not take his meals for two days, he was so much overpowered; and in his frenzy he saw no room for escape, except to give his consent to such arrangements as were proposed to him.

The Maharaja's helplessness, embarrassment, and melancholy left him without food for two full days. For him it was a sacrifice which substantiated the British contention of his imbecility.

But the new arrangement was totally bereft of any hope for the majority of Kashmiris[25] whose plight they had clamoured to change since the inception of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. There was no Muslim in the Council; 'let alone such high position', they were not considered to even serve in the army.[26] The earlier British clamourings were the merest pretensions to obtain what they wanted: the unquestioned supremacy over Kashmir which they got easily; enabling them to reach the northern most point of the British rule, Misghar, and occupy Hunza and Nagar along the way. The Maharaja was consoled for behaving more like a servant of *Sahibs* than a king. He was made Grand Commander of the Star of India, [27] but was denied the power of even appointing a *tehsildar*. He was simply a figure head. While lamenting the decline in his position, the Maharaja writes: [28]

> I am supposed to be no factor in the machinery of the State and nobody cares for me. I am not even allowed to sign papers for the Resident; I can not even appoint a *tehsildar*. Realy I am quite helpless, nothing is in my hands.

By 1905 A.D., Maharaja's stars began shining again. The British had achieved their targets: the establishment of political agency in Gilgit;[29] the creation of the North West Frontier Province; and the submission of the chiefs of Hunza-Nagar.[30] Now they decided to restore powers to Pratap Singh. Nicholson writes: [31]

> After we had obtained what we wanted from Kashmir, the Maharaja (Pratap Singh) was restored to the throne in 1905 but was subject to the veto of the Resident.

The State Council was, thus, abolished and its powers conferred on the Maharaja who was to be assisted by a Chief Minister and three other ministers with the portfolios of Revenue, Home and Judiciary. The ministers had to send the cases to the Maharaja through the Chief Minister. Each case was to be approved by the Resident.[32] However; in 1921A.D., full powers were restored to the Maharaja.[33] In 1924 A.D., he installed the Executive Council of five members with himself as its President with the power of veto. All the members were apportioned portfolios with the power to pass administrative orders.

But even after complete restoration of powers, the Maharaja failed miserably to register his mark as a good administrator as before. Once again he came to be surrounded by a coterie of Kashmiri Pandit friends and advisors under whose influence he did all that was detrimental to the Muslim interests.[34] He would very often rectify or cancel his orders issued by him after having a doze of opium.[35] He was so superstitious that most of the time he remained absorbed in witchcraft; invoking *Tantric* powers to guard himself against the power of his enemies.[36] So excessive was his greed for wealth and revenue that he stooped so low as to patronize prostitution and trafficking in women. To substantiate this, Arthur Brinkman writes:[37]

> The class engaged in it [prostitution] are owned as slaves and others, by those who were formerly in their position. The authority of the latter is backed by the whole power of the Dogra Maharaja, to whom reverts at their death all the wealth gathered by the prostitutes during their infamous life. Should one of their bond women or dancing girl attempt to leave her degrading profession, she is driven back with the lash and rod into her mistress's power.

With the Maharaja's patronage, the prostitution flourished so increasingly that it dragged down to dust the name and fame of Kashmir. In Lahore and many other places '*Kashmiri Bazars*' were founded to carry on the scandalous flesh and white slave trade.[38]

The Maharaja was a bigoted Hindu and a thorough sceptic about the truth of other religions and he, therefore, opposed tooth and nail the formation of religious or political societies.[39] He was equally opposed to the establishment of press in Kashmir.[40] The Maharaja died in 1925A.D., without a direct heir and his brother's (Amar Singh) son, Hari Singh, became the Maharaja; inheriting a regime which continued conscripting the people for various public works as before.

Maharaja Hari Singh's reign was characterized by corruption, maladministration, nepotism, red tapism, regionalism and communalism. His unbridled army of imported officials created havoc by ravaging the country and subjecting the peasantry and handicraftsmen to extortionate demands. The Maharaja reinforced *begar* which had been theoretically abolished in 1893 A.D., and made frantic efforts to foist his communal beliefs on the entire bureaucracy which resulted, as we shall see later, in alienating the Kashmiri Muslims from the Dogras and affected the Hindu-Muslim relations considerably; letting the bitter resentment, that persisted since the commencement of Gulab Singh's rule, to take political shape. He was averse to the reform movement initiated by the British through their Residency in Kashmir. Sir Walter Lawrence's settlement, for example, which left the cultivator with about 70% of the yield of the land, was foiled when the State officials deprived the peasants of every-thing they possessed; making them slaves of rural indebtedness and money-lenders. Industry, trade and commerce too witnessed a decline; their losses reached their nadir, and tension, despair and despondency encircled all trades due to heavy taxation that did not even spare prostitutes and scavengers.

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) J.D. Cunningham, *op.cit*, p.332 & n.
2) P.N.K. Bamzai, *Socio-Economic History of Kashmir*, p.40.
3) It was due to this agreement that an adequate British military assistance was provided to Gulab Singh to enable him to secure the occupation of Kashmir. For details of the agreement see R.K. Parmu, *op.cit*, pp.258-259; F.M. Hussnain, *Freedom Struggle In Kashmir*, pp.11-12.
4) Quoted in Bawa Satindar Singh's, *The Jammu Fox*, p. 134.
5) J.L. Morison, *Lawrence of Lucknow*, p.255.
6) *Tarikh-i-Hassan*, II, fol. 343.
7) Vide Bawa Satindar Singh, *loc.cit*, pp.167-168.
8) F .Sec. (NAI), 28th Jan, 1848, No: 43-A.
9) F. Sec. (NAI), 26th Sept. 1851 Nos. 10-11.
10) Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 213.
11) P.N.K. Bamzai, *loc.cit*, p.47.
12) Walter Lawrence, *loc.cit*, p. 213.
13) For Trans-Himalayan campaigns see Bamzai, *loc.cit*, pp.47-48.
14) The initial approach of Ranbir Singh to the Russians had been made in 1868 A.D., at the behest of the British in an attempt to find out what the Russians were up to. But the true nature of his dealings with the Russians came to be appreciated after the second Afghan war of 1879A.D., when a number of documents were recovered by Sir Federick Roberts in Kabul.
15) Sachdanand Sinha, *Kashmir-The plyground of Asia*, p. 18.
16) F.Sec. (NAI), E, May 1884, Nos: 354-357.
17) F.Sec. (NAI), E, April 1889, Nos: 80-98.
18) See M.L. Kapoor, *Kashmir Sold & Snatched*, p. 149. M. Alexander & Anand, *Queen Victoria's Maharaja Dalip Singh*, pp. 228-276.
19) See Alastair Lamb, *Kashmir-A Disputed Legacy*, p. 29.
20) Quoted in *ibid*, p.13.
21) See P.N.K. Bamzai, *loc.cit*, p.53.
22) Quoted in Alastair Lamb, *loc.cit*, p. 13.
23) Quoted in P.N.K. Bamzai, *loc.cit*, p. 53.
24) F.Sec. (NAI), E, August. 1889, Nos: 169-203.
25) Untold miseries and hardships continued to be inflicted on the Muslims on whose Labour and property the Hindu officials had a right. As before, the Muslim peasantry continued to be dragged away from their houses to carry loads to Gilgit. The soldiers forced them to plough and sow, and the same soldiers attended at harvest time to harass them. The officials enjoyed tremendous powers under

the system of *mujawaza*. They could deprive a village of its year's food stocks. Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 411-412. Also see, F.M. Hassnain, *op.cit*, pp.16-17.

26) See M.J. Akbar, *Kashmir Behind the Vale*, p.66.

27) Vide *ibid*.

28) The Maharaja expressed these feelings in his letters, dated 29th Jan. and 7th Sept, 1895, to the Residency *vakil*. *Kashmir Government Records*, File No.I, 1892, J&K Archives.

29) It was Gilgit the Government of India wanted so intensely. Digby *Condemned Unheard*, p. 103. Its possession enebled the British to strengthen their line of defence and check the Russian overtures. While admitting this, the Government of India stated:
"The advance of Russia up to the frontiers of Afganistan, and the great development of her military resources in Asia, had admittedly increased the necessity for strengthening our line of defence, and that among the points requiring special attention were the northern passes of the Hindukush which afford a difficult but not impracticable route for a force large enough to cause excitement if nothing worse in Kashmir among the tribes of Bijaor, and perhaps at Jalalabad and on the Punjab frontier. Quoted in P.N.K. Bamzai, *op.cit*, pp. 53-54.

30) See *ibid*, pp. 54-55.

31) Vide M.J. Akbar, *loc.cit*.

32) See P.N.K. Bamzai, *op.cit*, pp. 55-56.

33) For the restoration of full powers, the Maharaja had to implore the British Viceroy and tickle his vanity. He pleaded that he was at the fag end of his life and in March, 1921 A.D., Lord Chelmsford restored full powers to him in a *Darbar* held at Jammu. *Kashmir Government Records*, file No. 104, 1920, J&K Archives.

34) F.M. Hassnain, *op.cit*, p. 16.

35) P.N.K. Bamzai, *loc.cit*.

36) It is said that the Maharaja resorted to witch-craft and brought about the deaths of his enemies: Amar Singh, Ram Singh, Col. Nisbet, Bhag Ram and others. F.M. Hassnain, *loc.cit*, p.17.

37) *Kashmir Government Records*, J&K Archives.

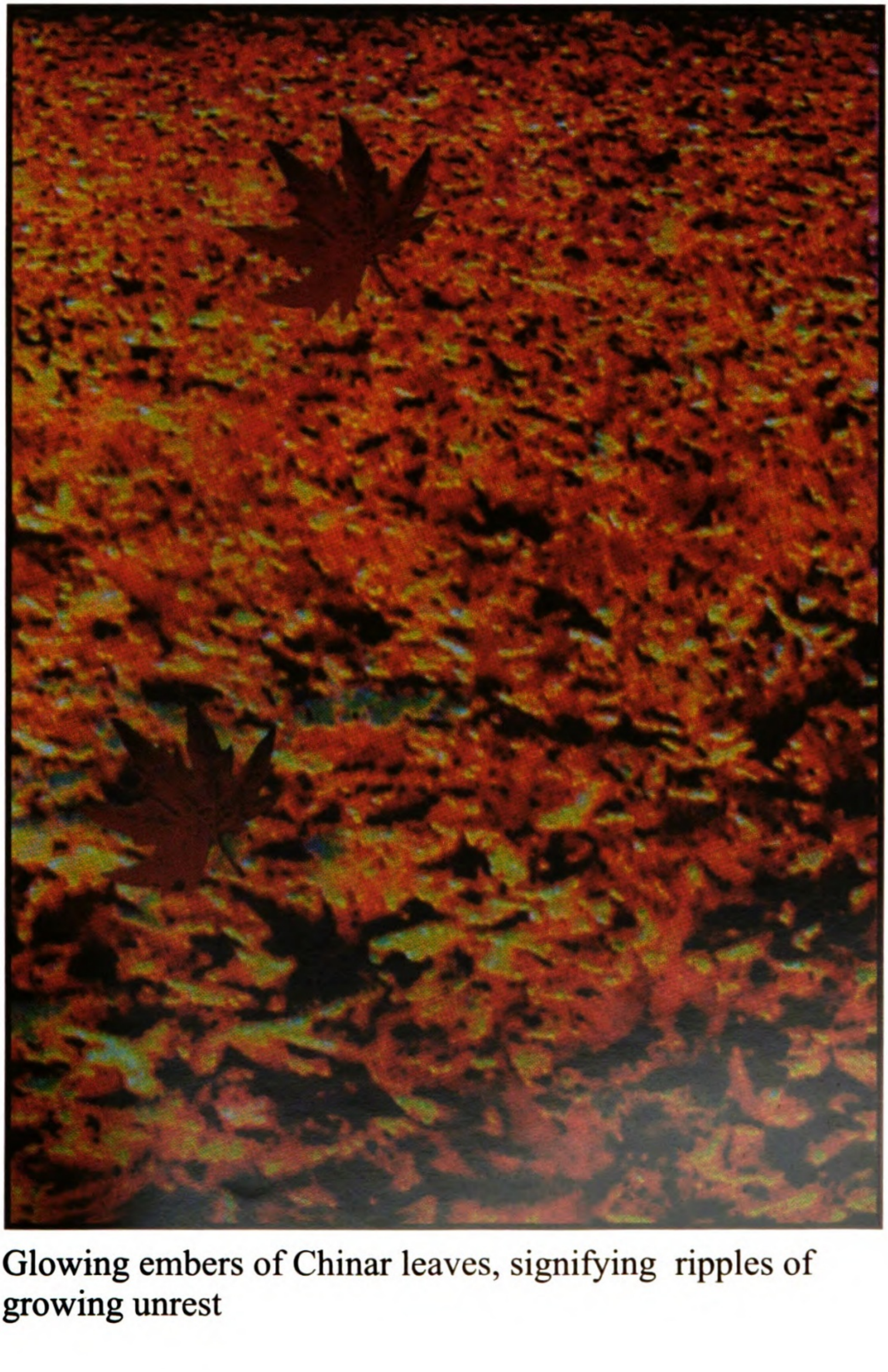
38) See Thakur Das, *Study of Christian Pioneers in Education in Kashmir*, p. 43.

39) P.N.K. Bamzai, *loc.cit*, p.56.

40) *Ibid*.

PART-V

THE STRIVING FOR A CHANGE — THE ASSERTION OF KASHMIRI PERSONALITY



Glowing embers of Chinar leaves, signifying ripples of growing unrest

The Kashmiris began showing a little fighting spirit when the ghost-ruler, Gulab Singh's name was officially declared as the future Maharaja of Kashmir.

—Dr. Ahad

The sudden outburst of *shawl-baf's* anger resulted in *Khandwaw hartal*, and then in Zaldagar uprising, a millenarian rebellio which left a lasting imprint on the community of Kashmiri handicraftsmen..... About 4,000 *shawl-bafs* fled the Valley to escape the horror of horrors....The rest made a compact of defence against those who threatened their survival; thus, setting a precedent for the future generations to follow.

—Dr. Ahad

....Uproar was a first stepping stone on the path of resistance against the State oppression.

—Dr. Ahad

THE RIPPLES OF GROWING UNREST

18

> The ripples of unrest began to surface when the Kashmiris became conscious of lack of their influence on the decision making process; of their economic exploitation to the benefit of aliens, and when they propelled their voice across the line and vehemently spoke up against atrocities.
>
> —Dr. Ahad

The centuries of subjugation and surrender to arbitrary powers had made Kashmiris ambivalent towards their rulers but they had reconciled themselves to a lifetime subordination because the Mughals,[1] the Afghans[2] and the Sikhs[3] had established their regimes in Kashmir with the connivance of the indigenous support. The growing abhorrence against a regime would prompt them into inviting another power with the hope that their aspirations would be accommodated in the new set-up. Through this mechanism of politics of invitations they exercised their influence on the affairs of their country and reconciled with what followed under the new invited regime. As a good safety- valve for the tensions they built up under an oppressive regime, this course of action, available in the circumstances, was adequate enough to enable them to shape their attitudes and not to resort to agitations and virulent protests.

But the transfer of their land to an upstart by an unrelated power deprived them of this safety- valve; rendering them helpless in face of the new developments that followed the Treaty of Amritsar in 1846 A.D. The vacuum created by the loss of this opportunity was, however, filled up with the rising turbulent spirit which was capable of launching agitations and protests from time to time.

The Kashmiris began showing a little fighting spirit when the ghost-ruler, Gulab Singh's name was officially declared as the future Maharaja of Kashmir.[4] They were conscious of the wider implications of the new arrangement for their future which was likely to land them in deep trouble and bog them down in the quagmire of exploitation to the benefit of the new ruler of whose despicable actions they had enough previous experience.[5] They showed enthusiasm in cooperating with those who were hostile to Gulab Singh and determined to stall his entry into the Valley by force. And when the Dogras appeared on the Kashmir soil the people rose in unison, filling the air with the cry of *'Nara-i- Takbir'* which resounded throughout the Valley; inspiring their brethren to respond by letting out an ear- splitting yell: *Allah-u-Akbar'*. The entire lot of the Kashmiris left their homes and hearths to join the agitators, comprising the manufacturers, the merchants, the hill chiefs and the regular forces, to challenge the legitimacy of the Dogra regime[6] whom the British (unconcerned power) had given the mandate to rule Kashmir; a crucial and ubiquitous factor in Kashmir's history which was bound to deprive the people of their control on the means of production and subject them to the new forces of coercion and Lord's extortions. They fought shoulder to shoulder till they were suppressed by the British armed intervention.[7] The Kashmir army too was quelled through threats carried out by the British; intimidating them into doing what they wanted.

They warned them:[8]

> Let it be known to the Kashmir army that it has come to our knowledge that you have joined hands with the Shaikh [Imam-ud-Din] and started troubles and seized the fort of Hari Parbat. Hence a warning is issued to you so that you may see reason and come to terms; for in it lies your betterment. You must obey, for your obedience and surrender is demanded and is in accordance with the instructions of the Lahore Government if you do not heed, you must remain prepared for destruction. You must surrender and lay down your arms this side.

The hill chiefs were also thrown into complete disarray when the British tried threats and intimidation:[9]

> ...Shaikh Imam-ud-Din...has taken the path of rebellion and is engaged in war with Gulab Singh, it is declared that all should keep themselves aloof from him, till Gulab Singh is installed in Kashmir, by all possible means.

To end the uprising, the British employed all methods for they did not want it to develop into a big flare up to creat enormous difficulties for them.

The failure of the Kashmiris did not, however, dampen their hurly- burly attitude; it continued reigning supreme in their life throughout the Dogra regime and gave a clear notion to the British of what the Kashmiris required at that juncture as a new dispensation. As a result, the British sought an undertaking from Gulab Singh that he would:[10]

a) dispose of the produce of Kashmir, received as revenue, at a *khush khared* rate;
b) collect custom duties only at specified places;
c) treat his subjects equally;
d) guarantee religious freedom to the Muslims;
e) give fair treatment to hill chiefs and Khakhas and Bombas;
f) pay eight Kashmiri *rupees* monthly to each soldier as emolument;
g) not increase the revenue;
h) pay two *annas* to each, engaged in *begar*, as remuneration.

Khandwaw's Hartal—A Primordial Swamp

But this agreement turned into a complete fiasco owing to the duplicity of Gulab Singh. He had neither the inclination nor the will to introduce the changes as envisaged in the agreement. He was, as noted earlier, determined to be mean enough to extract every penny from the people like a cork from a bottle; converting the situation into a slanging—match in which *shawl-bafs*, farmers, shopkeepers and manufacturers created hue and cry. The prospect for improvement became more gloomy when the Maharaja enforced *begar*[11] vigorously and initiated rapacious measures to fleece people ruthlessly; earning for himself the notoriety of money grubber and parsimony.[12] The worst afflicted Kashmiris, with the Maharaja's tax policy, were the poor shawl weavers upon whose earnings he fell like a serpent; forbidding them 'whether half blind or otherwise incapacitated', to abandon their operation without finding a substitute in order to ensure a nonstop flow of income for himself.[13] Torrens writes:[14]

> Gulab Singh went beyond his predecessors in the gentle acts of undue taxation and extortion. They had taxed heavily it is true, but he sucked the very life blood of the people. They had laid violent hands on a large proportion of the fruits of the earth, the profits of the loom, on the work of men's hands. But he skinned the very flints to fill his coffers.

The shawl weavers were forced to prepare ' gaily coloured shawls, the threads of which were not the only ones woven on the loom to their completion, threads of life, more costly than the softest *pashm*, whose price would be demanded by heaven, yet were spun out there on the loom of sickness and suffering'. Nothing but death could release them from the Maharaja's 'bondage, since the discharge of a *shawl-baf* would reduce the Maharaja's revenue by 36 *Chilkees* a year', besides extortions.[15]

About 4,000 *shawl-bafs* managed to flee the Valley to escape the horror of horrors:[16] forcible extortions; ruinous taxation; cumbersome administrative procedures; compulsory weaving; dolorous wage system; *begar* into which even their children were conscripted.[17] Fraught with the consequences of inflicting a severe blow to the shawl industry, the real goose that laid golden eggs, this unhealthy trend disturbed him a lot. To prevent the growing emigration of the *shawl-bafs*, and, thereby, save the inevitable doom of the industry, he introduced *rahdari* system; ordering his troops to plug all escape routes and passes.[18] Thus, stranded in the whirlpool of unprecedented oppression, the hapless *shawl-bafs* began straining at the leash to escape weaving. To them no other course seemed as a welcome relief from their suffering than to peel off their thumbs; a choice that disabled them from pursuing weaving but with a bounden duty to keep the trade going by providing a substitute.[19]

Unable to comply with the harsh directives, the scarcely remunerated, scantly clad, poorly fed, shabbily treated, emaciated looking and sullen *shawl-bafs* refused to attend their looms. They observed a complete *hartal* on June, 12, 1847 A.D., and unequivocally demanded:[20]

1. the reduction in taxes, *baj, nazrana* and extortions;
2. the fixation of wages;
3. the establishment of rule of law; and
4. the introduction of new regulations for the reorganization of the shawl industry.

The upsurge of their anger was so unsparing that they declined to work; compelling the Maharaja to accept their demands in an open *Darbar*.[21] But sufficiently trained in deceit, he withheld his promise after dissuading them from the strike which was more an expression of the helplessness of workmen than of any organized struggle.[22] The fate of the *hartal* was well sealed before it could mature into a trade- union movement of the sort.

Zaldagar Uprising — A Millenarian Rebellio

That the Maharaja had played a hoax on the *shawlbafs* became amply known to them after they resumed their work. Things continued as they were before; not allowing them to even eke out an existence in face of their ever increasing bondage. The other Kashmiris were equally suffering from years of want; there was no one to have pity for the starving millions. Following the traditions of his father, the new Maharaja (Ranbir Singh) exploited them to the full, aggravating their economic ruin beyond imaginable proportions.[23] He did not even hesitate to get hundreds of famine stricken Kashmiris drowned in the Wular for which inhuman act he was, subsequently, exonerated because no Kashmiri dared come forward to give evidence.[24] As a consequence started the migration march towards Lahore in violation of *rahdari,* and a good number of Kashmiris succeeded in getting past the passes by withstanding extremes of atrocities, committed by the soldiers, and by bribing the guards.[25]

The tradition of protest set in 1847 A.D., by their predecessors and bequeathed to their successors by the march of history, gave a cue to about 1500 shawl workers in 1865A.D., to proceed in vain to present to Kripa Ram, the governor designate (in place of Punno), on his way to Srinagar, these demands:[26]

1. allow them to purchase more than eight *kharwars* of *shali* yearly;

2. full deduction in the price of *shali* sold to them by the Government; and
3. sell them *shali* at the rate of seventeen *annas* a *kharwar* instead of eighteen *annas.*[27]

Having failed to meet the governor at Pampore,[28] they went in large numbers to gather at Zaldagar[29] where from they marched in a procession towards his residence to submit their petition. Rajkak, the clever *darogah,* an accomplished intriguer, however, thwarted their mission.[30] He wrongly informed the governor that the crowd was there to assault him; provoking him into ordering his soldiers to disperse them. The troops opened fire and indiscriminate shooting panicked the crowd into running helter-skelter down the road towards the Zaldagar bridge where another Dogra contingent was already present to attack and encircle them; leaving them with no option but to get killed in the melee or to jump into the *kul* (canal).[31] The bridge also collapsed under heavy pressure; sending many down into the canal. The following day they made frantic efforts at taking out their dead colleagues in a procession but were dispersed with the show of armed strength and the arrest of their leaders, namely Kudda Lala, Ali Pala, Rasool Sheikh and Sona Shah who were beaten to death.[32] And those who withstood the torture were imprisoned at Bahu fort, Jammu. A large number of workmen were also rounded up and sent to jails where they died of physical and mental torture. The dead bodies afloat the water of the *kul* were secretly buried by the authorities.[33]

The sudden outburst of the *shawl-bafs* anger, resulting in great bloodshed, was, thus, an unprecedented upheaval which left a lasting imprint on the community of handicraftsmen. The great powers of endurance, sacrifice and resistance exhibited by their leaders, against heavy odds, throughout the turbulence, aroused workmen's conscience, beckoning them to make a compact of defence against those who threatened their survival; thus, setting a precedent for the future generations to follow. Even though it failed to become a collective social action for wider societal issues due to the isolationist syndrome and unsympathetic attitude of dispersed, unconnected and unorganizable masses, this rising unnerved the authorities and compelled them to contrive a device of dirty tricks to suppress it. By fomenting *Sunni-Shia* discord they divided the artisans and incited them to sectarian violence that besieged the entire city with riots, loot, arson and rap; a good excuse for the Government to clamp down on rioters and bring Srinagar under army control.[34] About 300 Kashmiris were banished to Jammu; 180 were interned in Ram Nagar Jail; a large number of them was fined. A fine of *rupees* 5000 was imposed on Mohi-ud-Din Gandroo; Moulvi Nisar-ud-Din had to pay a fine of *rupees* 2000.[35]

Thus, the authorities suppressed the uprising by an appalling display of naked force but nevertheless they gauged the strength of the rising tension from the outburst which was indicative of the workmen's shift from obeying the Government to rebelling against it. To prevent its recurrence, they reduced the tax of 49 *rupees* by 11 *rupees*.[36] Three years later Maharaja Ranbir Singh reduced the price of *shali* as well, and abolished the tax retaining only a nominal duty on the export of shawls. Then in 1886 A.D., Maharaja Partap Singh abolished this nominal duty too.[37]

The *shawl-baf's* uproar was a first stepping stone on the path of resistance against the State oppression; an unflinching and unprecedented strength to voice their growing disquiet about the continuation of the autocratic crimes. But nevertheless it was a short-lived urban affair which, even though landed the entire city into a frenzy of sectarian violence, got stuck with the community of artisans and did not percolate through the countryside to evoke the sympathy of the villagers. The cultivators and peasants, whose plight presented a spine-chilling saga of horrible exploitation, were not least stirred by this event. Feeble and docile, as they were, they continued enduring great economic deprivation by working to feed others before they could feed their own. They were not even prompted into dreaming about an illusory justice that would spiritually illuminate them to aspire for their release from the clutches of *begar;* the arsenal of exploitation and oppression, which divorced them, not infrequently, from their families and occupations during winters and obliged them to carry loads at the risk of losing fingers and toes from frostbite. Their lives would often slip away from their fists while ascending the difficult mountains with the heavy loads to ensure regular supply of food, arms and ammunition to the soldiers, and merely for the sake of humouring the sporting propensities of the Europeans. Through the dense forests and up above the snowy hills, the piercing sound of their pathetic cries reverberated without attracting the attention of the callous soldiers and the hoity-toity visitors. This saga of their pitiably patched lives repeated every year with increasing enormities of disaster and crime till 1947.

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) See chapter, *The Mughal Imperium*
2) See chapter, *The Culture Shock.*
3) See chapter, *The Bebuj Raj.*
4) See F. Deptt, (NAI), 26th Dec. 1846, No. 1125; F. Deptt, Poll (NAI) 30th Jan.1837. No.28. For details see Appendix "E". The Kashmiris were deadly opposed to the occupation of their motherland by Gulab Singh who had already given a sufficient proof of his anti-Kashmiri feeling during his Ladakh campaigns. He had also inflicted barbarities on the people of Punch and Kishtwar.
5) See Abdul Ahad, *Kashmir to Frankfurt*, pp. 76, 82 & n.7; M.Y. Saraf, *Kashmir's Fight for Freedom*, p.205.
6) *Ibid.*
7) *Ibid.*
8) Vide Robert Thorp, *Kashmir Misgovernment* (Printed, Edited & Recast), p.11.
9) *Ibid*, p. 12.
10) F. Sec. (NAI), 26th Dec, 1846 Nos: 1142-1146; Nos: 1243-1247.
11) Excepting Pandits, all Kashmiris were subjected to *begar* irrespective of their age and physical health. Even children were not spared from the hated forced labour for which no remuneration was paid. The people were dragged out of their houses against their will and beaten to death if they dared the Dogra official's right to command them to *begar*. For details see Walter Lawrence, *op.cit*, pp.411-415; *Research Biannual*, Vol. I, No.11, 1976, pp. 58-71.
12) In the time of Sheikh Imam-ud-Din the total revenue of Kashmir amounted to Rs. 339, 200,00; but it rose to Rs. 843,000,00 during the first year of the reign of Maharaja Gulab Singh. See Robert Thorp, *loc.cit*, p.15.
13) *Ibid*, p.51.
14) Vide *ibid*, p. 22, n.1.
15) Vide *ibid*, p.51.
16) Abdul Ahad, *loc.cit*, pp.64, 106.
17) Bawa Satinder Singh, *op.cit*, p.174.
18) *rahdari*, signifying a permit for leaving the territories of one's country, was enforced vigorously. Under this system the Dogra Government stationed troops at the barriers to prevent the migration of *shawl-bafs*, see Abdul Ahad, *loc.cit.*
19) They were bond-slaves; not allowed to relinquish the weaving even if they became half-blind. *Ibid*, p.64.
20) *Ibid*, pp. 76-77.

21) *Ibid.* Pannikar's contention that this upsurge inspired Maharaja Gulab Singh to reorganize the shawl industry, as a result of which "the workmen became free" and "the *shagrid* (novice) no longer remained a serf", (*op.cit*, p. 18) is not tenable. He has failed to note that these regulations were never implemented.

22) Abdul Ahad, *loc.cit.* According to Griffin: "There are perhaps no characters in history more repulsive than Raja Gulab Singh whose splendid talents and undoubted bravery count as nothing in the presence of his atrocious cruelty, his avarice, his treachery, and his unscrupulous ambition". Vide *ibid*, p. 82, n. 18.

23) See *supra*, chapter, *Servants of Sahibs.*

24) *Ibid.*

25) See Abdul Ahad, *loc.cit*, p.106.

26) See Robert Thorp, *Cashmere-Misgovernment* (typed copy), pp.18-20.

27) The Pandit ordered the *shawl-bafs* to pay 18 *annas* per *kharwar* instead of 17 *annas*, intending, thereby, to make an *anna* on each *kharwar* of *shali* for himself *(ibid.)*. The Pandit was *darogah of dagh-i-shawl.*

28) Situated on the right bank of Jehlum River, Pampore is famous for Saffron cultivation.

29) Zaldagar is a locality in the Srinagar city, 3 kms. from Lal Chowk.

30) Abdul Ahad, *loc.cit*, p.78; *Tarikh-i-Hassan* (Urdu), p. 577.

31) Twenty eight persons are said to have been killed in this way. *Ibid.*

32) J&K Archives, File No. 316, 1865, p.57; File no. 313 E, 1865.

33) J&K Archives, File no. 313A, 1865; File no. 303, 1922 *Samvat.*

34) In the riots both the workmen and employers were destroyed. It was a coincidence that the employers were mostly the *Shias* while the workmen were the *Sunnis*. *Tarikh-i-Hassan, loc.cit.*

35) Vide Mohmad Yousuf Saraf, *loc.cit*, p.292.

36) *Ibid.*

37) *Ibid.*

OF PRAYERS AND PETITIONS

19

What is life but the book of change?
Change-more-change and yet more
change;
flux is the living reality,
and change the meaning of flux....
—Abdul Ahad Azad.

When I witness ups and downs, banks and
demarcations,
I lose my temper
I seek oneness and quality, for that
I run and foam and fret;
hence is it that, water though I am,
I have fallen on the burning coals of the
mulberry-woods.
—Abdul Ahad Azad.

The *shawl-baf's* uprising was a precursor of a very significant change in the Anglo-Dogra relations, resulting in creating an environment that encouraged the British to accelerate their interference in the Kashmir affairs and encroach on the prerogatives of the Dogra regime[1] to prepare the ground for the profound alterations in the system which had placed obstacles in the way of their imperialism, besides having now become obsolete.

Thus, the British established their Residency in Kashmir which, eventually, paved the way for their assuming a supervisory role in the State administration;[2] an important role that enabled them to safeguard their own interests in the garb of the saviours of Kashmir.[3] While steering the Maharaja towards their key objectives: control over Gilgit and a secured position on the North Western Frontier; the British Residency provided an opportunity to the Kashmiris to express their grievances which had vastly augmented and been made public by Robert Thorp through his writings.[4] In a petition some representatives of the Kashmiris stated:[5]

> No sooner the Kashmir Residency was established things took a turn for the better. Laws were enforced to protect life and property….. We feel certain that 'we shall be relieved of the tyranny and *zulm*, which has with the advance of times taken a new form to express itself.

The establishment of the British Residency was an epoch- making phase in the Anglo- Kashmir relations that, eventually, gave an orderly shape to the growing undercurrent of public grievances. It symbolized the commencement of political awakening in Kashmir that resulted in gradual stimulation of public aspirations for a fair socio- economic system with equal opportunities for all irrespective of their religious affiliations and in which there was no one to take away their meager surplus. Moreover, it signified a marked improvement in communication network: road connectivity;[6] telegraphic facilities;[7] which threw open the secluded Valley to outside influences; giving a further impetus to the nascent socio-political ideas. While appreciating the reforms introduced on the initiative of the British Residency in Kashmir, P.N.K. Bamzai writes:[8]

> ... [The Resident] carried out several reforms in the administrative machinery which benefited the people. This also resulted in bringing to the State the type of education and medical relief as then prevalent in the provinces directly under the British rule.

The opening of Jehlum Valley Cart- road enabled the Western ideas to float through the Kashmiri minds; familiarizing them with the rising tide of democracy in the West.[9] Besides, it encouraged a huge influx of visitors, [10] and prompted missionaries to extend their philanthropic activities to the Valley which exercised a profound influence on the masses and alleviated their age-old stresses and strains. For their 'human exertions' and 'truly Christian charity and demeanour', these missionaries won tremendous applause, love and respect from the Kashmiris.[11] While commenting on this, Dr. Ernest Neve observes:[12]

> The opposition of the State authorities had been, to a considerable extent overcome, the confidence of the Kashmiris had been won, and an immense amount of relief had been afforded to sufferers.

The missionaries were also a boon to the famine-stricken Kashmiris. Fanshaw highly commended their work and wrote thus: [13]

> The only bright spot in the dreary history of the Kashmir famines was the devoted and unselfish conduct of the missionaries.

Kashmir became, thus, an important arena of missionary activities which affirmed the need for strict adherence to humanitarian principles. The selfless labour, dedication, skill and kindness, of which the missionaries were the embodiment, brought about a great change in the outlook of the people. The sacrifice made by the lady missionaries, who laid their lives while on duty in the Valley,[14] attending to the sick at the Mission Hospital, Drugjan,[15] Srinagar, struck a chord among the Kashmiris and inculcated them with moral and physical courage which they lacked owing to the non-availability of the modern educational and training facilities.[16] The advent of these facilities resulted in the arrival of European educators whose influence reached the corners of Kashmir and loosened the traditional socio-religious matrix of the Valley. Tyndale Biscoe was the foremost to galvanize into activity a regular system of education conspicuously good to induce a spirit of social work among the pupils of the Mission schools established by him in Kashmir. Henry Sharp writes: [17]

> [C.M.S] has developed a remarkable *esprit de corps*, and the utmost care is devoted to physical instruction, to the encouragement of manliness and to the cultivation of the civic virtues. With its record of life-saving and other public benefits, the school is an important asset to Srinagar and holds a unique position.

The vigour with which the missionaries imparted modern education to the young Kashmiris and attended to the sick and ailing people resulted in creating a new fervour which pushed some enthusiastic and enlightened men, a new class of educated Kashmiris immensely knowledgeable about Western thought and history, to the forefront to break the traditional public mould by voicing their concerns about the growing religious obscurantism and superstition that surrounded the masses with insurmountable problems.[18] While the Pandits were the foremost in seizing the initiative in launching a scathing attack on the child marriage and the conspicuous consumption, and the ancient Hindu customs;[19] the Muslims did not lag behind in their campaign against the enslavement of their entire community by the *peers,* the *mullahs* and the *fakirs*.[20] Pandit Suraj Kak Matoo[21] and Pandit Hargopal Kaul[22] exhibited tremendous reformist zeal when in 1894 A.D., they started Hindu reform movement which had become vitally essential inconsequence of the pathetic sight of young whimpering widows whose desperate plight was ably depicted by Mr. Biscoe in these words:[23]

> As there was no restriction to early marriage there were numbers of child widows who were obliged to live in their father-in-law's house, and do as they were told. I came to know of the cruelties practiced on these girls especially by the Brahman priests, who were often the fathers of the drowned babies. The infants were thrown either in the river or to the pariah dogs at night so that the Hindu religion should not be disgraced.

The movement became hugely popular among the Pandits and received great support from different quarters, especially the Pandits serving in the British India. The Hindu women sang songs in praise of the reformers:[24]

Hargopalas vakil-i-Darbaras
Rakshsas kati aai devta bodh
kath mokaalvin baji balaye
Suraj Kakni agnyaye.

> 'Strange for Hargopal, the *vakil* at the court, a member of the evil profession, to get godly inspiration. At the behest of the great Suraj Kak, he freed the sheep from cruel death'.

Similarly, during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, Husain Batku of Srinagar started *tajdid*, a reformist movement, against the cultic aspects of shrines, and *peer-muridi* tradition,[25] and rigidities of the religious schools of law, and preached the purification of the heart from vices and sin, and acknowledgement of the unity and transcendence of God. Batku's was a progressive movement that stressed the need for total reform of the Muslim community and urged the masses to adhere strictly to the Islamic values which had been overshadowed by the preponderance of local tradition and indigenous complexes. Violently opposed to the persistence of non-Islamic belief of a 'holy' union between the living and the dead, the movement expressed strong disapproval of the dogmatic view that the Prophet was still alive and in communion with his followers (a popular conviction of *Hayat-i-Nabi*) and generated a new feeling of optimism by denying 'the individual an exclusive right of a husband in his wife'.[26] But it failed to make any headway in face of stiff opposition of the *mullahs*, who obviously had a vested interest in the perennial ignorance of the Muslims, and in seeking Batku's expulsion from the State.[27]

However, Batku's mission was carried on by Sabzar Shah and Sidiq Hassan Khan who exercised their religious insight, knowledge and discipline to persuade people to shun superstition and *peer-parasti* and subscribe to pristine Islamic beliefs.[28] But they could not overcome the *mullah's* opposition and indignation which resulted in dissuading the masses to support them openly. It was in the twenties of the 20th century that the seed sown by Husain Batku ultimately sprouted in the establishment of *Anjuman-i-Ahl-i-Hadith*[29] which began openly and forcefully rejecting the veneration of any human being except the Prophet Mohammad and repudiated the worship of shrines and *asthans* under the inspiring guidance of Moulvi Ghulam Nabi Mubarki, Moulvi Noor-ud-Din and Moulvi Anwar Shah, whose dauntless criticism of *peers* provoked the *muftis* to issue a *fatwa* against the organization, debarring its members from entering the precincts of mosques.[30] Founding themselves beset by the toughened attitude of the Muslim clergy, a fierce denunciation by the *peers*—who scornfully dubbed the reformers as *kutas*—and the *mufti's* fiat, they initiated legal proceedings against the *fatwa* and proved the point in the court of law which gave verdict in their favour[31] that worked as a great morale booster. Consequently, they intensified their efforts to mobilize public opinion in defence of the movement not only by organizing heated debates in the mosques (at Zaldagar, Naid Kadal and Gow

Kadal) but also through their writings in the *Muslim*,[32] the *Anjuman's* official publication. Thus, began in Kashmir an explosion of pent-up resentment against accumulated insults of the *mullahs*.[33]

Having taken their roots, a few of the socio-religious organizations began shaping the attitudes of the people and mobilizing them for defence against antiquated socio-religious environment beset with the temptation of providing them elysium. Essentially concerned about preserving and promoting the religious-cultural ideology, completely divorced from superstition,[34] of their constituents, these organizations aroused communal conscience which in course of time became the backbone of the Kashmir's struggle against autocracy; an objective development that inspired the educated Hindus and Muslims to assume a new role of reformists in the mobilization of masses against backwardness, illiteracy and superstition which were critically biting the Valley and gradually eating into its vitality.

Whereas the interests of the Pandit community were represented by the *Arya Sabha, Dharam Sabha,* Fraternity Society and the *Yuvak Sabha,*[35] the Muslims formed the *Anjuman-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam* (and in later period, the *Anjuman-i-Hamdard Islam,* the *Anjuman-i-Tahaffuz-i-Namaz-Wa-Satri-Musturat*),[36] for the fulfillment of limited goals like *Tafsir-i-Quran* and the eradication of illiteracy; the root cause of their backwardness. While the Pandits challenged the old order by a religious revival under the leadership of Hari Krishan Kaul and Vedlal Dhar, who insisted that the Hindu religious and social practices must be reformed to meet the demands of new age; the Muslim organizations taught to improve the condition of mosques and make the teachings of the Prophet supreme, and persuaded the Muslims to send their children to the primary schools established in Srinagar in 1899 A.D., by Moulvi Rasool Shah, the pioneer of mass Muslim literacy movement in Kashmir who, like Sir Syed of Aligarh movement, realized that without modern education the Muslims would remain backward.[37]

Drawing inspiration from the *Dogra Sabha*, [38] Jammu, the Pandit organizations adopted more radical views on social issues, particularly the conditions of women and widow remarriage, and assumed a defensive posture on the issues of national importance; an important motivational factor for the Muslims to infuse fresh life into their socio-religious movement. But both the type of organizations could ill afford to annoy the establishment when they required its patronage so increasingly.

Thus, these reform movements gained momentum by degrees without impediments; each striving for the promotion of a life-style as devised by their respective religions. But no sooner Maharaja Pratap Singh had started extending open support to the *Arya Samaj's* hidden agenda of converting the Muslims to the Hindu fold, for preparing the ground for the formation of a Hindu theocratic State from Kashmir to Cape Camerin, than there was a loud knock at the door of the Muslim *Anjumans.* They began feeling apprehensive about their future. And their fears increased considerably when the *Milap*, Lahore, exposed what the *Arya Samaj* was aiming at:[39]

> This flower [Hindu State] will bloom from Calcultta to Kabul and from Kashmir to Cape Camerin..... Coversions will be

> completed to purify the masses. Both the Frontier Province and Afghanistan will be conquered.

Such a communally charged plot to establish a fascist State was bound to give a thorough jerking to the communal conscience of the Muslims. It was, in fact, a consciousness-raising event for them; resulting in radically changing their thinking and, eventually, polarizing the Hindu-Muslim opinions and attitudes to engage both the communities in polemics to accelerate the effectiveness of techniques of their respective communal organizations. But this polarization benefited the Pandits most. Being more educated, advanced and in better position, they had developed 'a reactionary interest in the administrative employments', which were beyond their reach due to overwhelming presence of the Punjabi officials in the State,[40] who had established a 'hierarchy in the services with the result that profits and wealth passed into the hands of the outsiders and the indigenous subjects lost enterprise and independence'.[41] Before getting bogged down in the irrelevant details of Indian politics and the establishment of a Hindu State, they decided to protect their rights within the State. Constant recruitment of the Punjabis in the State scared them stiff; slashing their aspirations for a career in the Government service, which were cultivated by their mothers, elders and even *purohits* right from their early childhood.[42] It led them into conceiving the Dogra administration in terms of not dispensing justice, and into deciding to defend their rights by raising the cry of *mulki* (indigenous).[43] To achieve their target, they chose the path of prayers and petitions, rather than that of agitation, as a course of their action.[44] Through their petitions[45] and extensive contacts in Lahore, Punjab, Lucknow and UP, they succeeded in prevailing upon the British to instruct the Maharaja that the *mulkis* (natives) be given preference in the State employment.[46] Their demand was finally accepted and a definition of 'State Subject' was formulated to protect the rights of the natives. While accepting the demand, the Maharaja declared:[47]

> None who was not a hereditary State subject should be appointed to any post in the State service, big or small, without his own express permission.

The new dispensation opened the gates of the State services to the natives; but only the Pandits could avail themselves of the full range of this facility as a large number of them had freshly turned out graduates from the college established in Srinagar through the good offices of Mrs. Annie Basant, the President of Theosophical Society of India, and with the active support of other luminaries of the Society.[48]

The outcome of the Hindu prayers and petitions and the subsequent absorption of the Pandit educated youth in the administration was quite an eye- opener for the Muslims; an example that awoke them from a deep sleep; making them realize that education was a real boon to fight backwardness of their community; motivating, thus, Moulvi Ahmadullah Shah, the successor of Moulvi Rasool Shah to intensify his literacy programme to broaden the Muslim communal horizon. As a result, his *Anjuman-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam* launched a vigorous campaign against illiteracy and kept exhorting the Muslims to achieve the benefits of modern education, through its schools, which would reduce, if not eliminate, poverty and backwardness, and inculcate them with the spirit of self-help, self-confidence and mutual support urgently required to save them from their fallen condition. At its second annual session, the *Anjuman* declared: [49]

> Neither a king, nor a ruler, nor a *Waiz* nor any admonitor, a sympathiser or a *Rais*....but only self-help.... [would enable the Muslims to make advancement.]

And the spirit of self-reliance could be developed through the relentless pursuit of education, which was 'a duty on every man and woman'. And: [50]

> No nation can progress...And no nation can claim to be civilized until it reaches the zenith of its educational career.

Sensing that the Government was totally apathetic about the lot of Muslims, the *Anjuman* decided to give up conventional techniques and, consequently, sent a deputation to the authorities to seek redress of the Muslim grievances, especially the removal of obstacles to community education. But all their appeals fell on deaf ears.

Not disheartened by this failure, the Muslim leaders of different hues: the *Mirwaiz* of *Jama Masjid*, the *Mirwaiz* of Khankah -i-Mulla, Saad-ud-Din Shawl, Noor Shah, Hassan Shah and Syed Jalali submitted, in 1922 A.D., a memorandum to the Viceroy with these demands:[51]

1) eradication of the Muslim backwardness in education;
2) share in the State services both gazetted and non-gazetted ranks;
3) grant of proprietary rights to peasants and farmers;
4) abolition of *begar*; and
5) restoration of mosques used by the Government for non religious purposes, particularly *Pather Masjid.*

The Viceroy forwarded the memorandum to the Maharaja who was swift enough to constitute a committee, to look into the grievances, which declared these having no substance; obliging the establishment take, thus, a strong action against the deputationists. As a result the deputationists had to bear the full brunt of punishment: confiscation of their *jagirs* and banishment from their native land; but the two *Mirwaiz* were simply reprimanded.[52] The whole episode was an important milestone in the country's history of sacrifices; a repeat lesson for the nascent Muslim leadership to be prepared to undergo appalling hardships in future for the sake of the community's betterment. But the magnitude of their sufferings was comparatively insignificant to the sacrifice made earlier by the *shawl-bafs*.

However, the major damage the Dogras did to the Muslim cause was to fish in whichever patch of troubled water they could locate. They extended patronage to the *Mirwaiz Jama Masjid* to wean him away from the *Mirwaiz* Khankah -i-Mulla; causing, thereby, a sharp cleavage in the

Muslim community which hampered the progress of the movement that was still at an embryonic stage. This was an embarrassing affair for the entire community which prevented it getting involved in the *Khalafat* Movement;[53] a major political wave then sweeping through the British India. The *Mirwaiz Jama Masjid* openly supported the Government; declaring the *Khalafat* agitators as non-religious trouble makers; demanding their immediate arrest; besides advocating a ban on the movement.[54]

Further damage was caused to the Muslim initiative by the mutual dislike between the two *Mirwaiz* whose irreconcilable differences and professional rivalry had torn them apart to the detriment of the larger interests of their community.[55] Totally opposed to *Ahmadiyas,* the *Mirwaiz Jama Masjid* did not allow their leader, Mirza Kamal to hold public meetings during his Kashmir sojourn; dismissing him as an unbeliever. But *Mirwaiz* Hamadani of Khankah-i-Mulla offered him premises to hold his meetings[56] which gesture embittered relations between the two *Mirwaiz* to the detriment of the Muslim unity; creating a manifold division in the community with discardant views which were to have fateful consequences in the future.

This division entailed a lot of petty squabbling among the *mullahs* which so cramped and frayed their mental capabilities that they could not think beyond peripheral issues. The objections and counter objections raised by them against each other's religious susceptibilities involved the entire community in a duel of words; a thorny bush of trivial religious controversy that permeated the whole Valley to vitiate the emerging reformist environment and to tear up the thin fiber of public conscience, which, eventually, sounded a loud siren of discord misheard by these *mullahs*. These *mullahs* resembled nimble footed performing artists who could continue engross public attention by launching a long tirade against each other, driving people to distraction from the pressing needs and indulge in gossip and bickering to their cost, especially in the field of education.They, thus, distanced the Muslims from the socio- economic betterment which was now within the reach of young, enterprising and educated Pandits as a result of the enforcement of 'State Subject' laws. All the posts in the State services came to be manned by the Pandits and the Muslims trailed behind them to cater to their every whim. The following is a graphic description of how the Muslims were exploited to satisfy the Pandit official's demands and replenish their stocks. On a routine visit of a *naib-tehsildar* the whole village would wait to welcome him:[57]

> On a high ground. Under the chinar and the shady trees, sitting arrangements would be made in advance, by spreading woolen blankets, *gabbas* and *namdas*. The *naib* would come on a horse, accompanied by a Muslim *sais* and the Pandit *patwari* and *kardar*. He was received by the *nambardar* of the village after the guard of honour presented by the village populace, in the shape of *wunwon* or the ladies coral singing. He would then sit on the highest pedestal, relaxing against the pillows and *diwans* like a Mughal dandy. One by one, the applicants would bow before him and pray for mutation

> of land or any other matter. The peasants would keep presents like birds, rice, ghee and lamb hidden under their garments, and by sign show it to the *naib* who would dispose off the cases one by one. In the evening, when he had to depart for his city home, some villagers would be selected by the *nambardar* to carry the presents to the *naib's* home. When he reached his home, not only his legs would be messaged but his horse also? It was a common practice that a young Muslim peasant lady would serve as a milkmaid for the babies of the Pandit *naib*, so that sucking of milk from breasts of the *naib's* wife would not affect her beauty. The baby of the milkmaid would cry for mother's milk in the stable. Her husband would serve as a servant entrusted with washing of kitchen utensils. But neither the maid nor the husband could enter the kitchen for fear of polluting it.

As a matter of fact the Kashmiri Muslims came to bear the brunt of official corruption perpetrated by the Pandit employees: 'the Police, the Revenue Department, the Forest officials, and even the employees of the Cooperative Society, [had] their palms oiled by exaction of the usual *rasum*....the channels of human kindness and mercy [had] run dry. To loot the peasant [was] no sin[58]...' Besides, they were constantly tormented with silly pejorative remarks and damning indictments on false charges of being liars.

REFERENCES & NOTES

1) For details see *supra, The Servants of Sahibs.*

2) The British Residency was established in Kashmir in 1888 A.D. The Resident was instructed by the British to thoroughly supervise the State administration and also suggest the means for the abolition of corrupt practices of the Dogra Government; for the rationalization of taxes; and for the removal of restrictions on migration (of the artisans) which in their opinion deserved serious attention. F. Sec. (NAI), Oct. 1886, No. 725.

3) The British Residents were regarded as saviours by the Kashmiris. F. Sec. E. (NAI), Oct. 1886, Nos: 289-291.

4) Mr. Robert Thorp was a British national. His mother, Amiran, belonged to Kashmiri race. She motivated her son to visit Kashmir where he remained for some time, informing the Europeans about the sad plight of the Kashmiris through his writings which appeared in various English papers. He is said to have been poisoned by the Dogra rulers who apprehended his egalitarianism and his involvement with the poor Kashmiris. He died on 22 Nov. 1868 A.D., and was buried at the Christian cemetery, Sheikh Bagh, Srinagar. His grave carried the following inscription:

ROBERT THORP
AGED 30 YEARS
OBIT
22 NOV. 1868
VERITAS
HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR KASHMIR.

Robert Thorp's "*Cashmere-Misgovernment*" deals with the socio-economic conditions of the people of Kashmir and is the most authentic source of information on the Dogra Government. For more details see, *Kashmir Misgovernment* (Printed, Edited & Recast).

5) F. G.B. (NAI), Jan. 190. Nos: 15-16.

6) Prior to the establishment of Residency there was no road worth the name in Kashmir–*Beyond the Pir Panjal*, p.240. In the Department of Public Works, the Residency gave prominence to opening up main lines of communication with the rest of India. F. Sec, E.(NAI), Feb,1891, Nos: 295-326. According to Walter Lawrence: the Public works Department under able officers has opened out the country to an extent never known before, whether

it be the road to Kishtwar, to Gilgit, to Srinagar from Jammu, or the Jehlum Valley Cart-Road.' *op.cit.*

The Postmaster-General, North West Province wrote: "There is no post office in Cashmere and no letter can now be sent from or to Cashmere. There are considerable numbers of British officers who visit Cashmere during summer who suffer from the absence of postal communications. The other people who suffer are the shawl merchants of Noorpur, Amritsar and Ludhiana who state that there are 50 shops in Cashmere belonging to Amritsar houses alone, and their only mode of communication is by *Qasid* (or special messenger) which is both slow and expensive". F.Sec. (NAI), 12 Sept. 1851 Nos: 148-149. The telegraph came into being in 1878 A.D. "With the desposition of the Maharaja [Pratap Singh] in 1889 A.D., and the assumption of the administration by the Resident, the way was cleared for the establishment of a number of post and telegraph offices in the State". Bamzia, *op.cit*, p.51

8) *Ibid.*

9) W.J. Cunningham, Secretary to Govt. of India wrote to Col. Nisbet, the Resident in Kashmir that "the Jehlum Valley road will do more to develop the civilization, the trade, and the moral and material improvement of the Valley of Kashmir".F. Sec. E, (NAI), Feb.1891, Nos: 295-326. Bamzai observes that 'the building of a first-rate cart road down the Jehlum Valley, linking Srinagar with Rawalpindi was a revolutionary undertaking'. *op.cit*, p. 80 n. 8. St. John, officer on special duty in Kashmir, had earlier emphasized the importance of the road in these words: 'Indeed if nothing else be done the road alone must make a vast change in Kashmir'. Vide *History of Srinagar*, p.37, n. 143. It was through the laudable efforts of the British Resident, Col. Nisbet that this magnificent piece of engineering was accomplished by cutting the Jehlum Valley cart-road along the mountain-sides from Domel to Baramulla in recorded time of ten years; it was commenced in 1880 A.D., and completed in 1890A.D. See Tyndale Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight & Shade*, p. 76; E.F. Knight, *Where Three Empires Meet*, p.9.

10) *Census*, 1941, p.27.

11) F. Pol. A(NAI), Sept. 1864, Nos: 74-76.

12) Ernest Neve, *Beyond the Pirpanjal*, p. 71.

13) F. Sec.E. (NAI), March, 1833, Nos: 81-82.

14) Vide *History of Srinagar*, p.130.

15) The Mission Hospital at Drugjan, Srinagar became a second pilgrimage centre, the first being Hazratbal. Arthur Neve, *Thirty Years in Kashmir* pp.301-302.

16) *maktabs* and *pathshalas* lacked these facilities.

17) Sir Henry Sharp's report, 1916, p.66. For more details about the Mission schools see *Social Service in Kashmir; A School in Action; With Pick and Shoval in Kashmir; Victory After Defeat; Digging Foundations in Kashmir*.

18) The advent of modern education resulted in the creation of a new class of educated Kashmiris who initiated certain cultural changes which have been both 'intensive and extensive'. For details see, *History of Srinagar*, pp.137-139. Founding the whole development rather unnerving, the *Arya Samjis, Ahmadiyas* and *Wahabis* made their appearance in Kashmir to counter the missionary activities. This resulted in the formation of associations and groups of far reaching consequences.

19) The practice of child marriage was deemed as a religious duty. P.A. Kaul, *The Kashmiri Pandits*, p.32. For other customs see Bamzai, *op.cit*, pp.302-304.

20) See Lawrence, *op.cit*, pp.233, 289, 293,296; Bates, *Gazetteer*, p.36. These *peers, mullahs* and *fakirs* held the Muslims in their grip.

21) The Mattoo Belonged to nobility and was a leading *rais* of his times. Bamzai, *op.cit*, p.307.

22) The Kaul was an eminent lawyer of his times. *Ibid.*

23) Tyndale Biscoe, *Autobiography*, p.96.

24) Vide Bamzai, *op.cit*, p.308.

25) *Peer-muridi* tradition is still prevalent in Kashmir. Bamzai traces its origin from the hereditary *purohits* who held the Pandits in their grip. *Ibid*, p.314.

26) Lawrence, *op.cit*, p.285.

27) The opposition of *mullahs* was overwhelming enough to compel Maharaja Ranbir Singh to expel Husain Batku from the State. *Tarikh-i-Hassan*, I, p.442.

28) *Ibid.*

29) *Census,* 1921, part I, p.64.

30) *History of Srinagar*, pp.107-108, n.180.

31) *Ibid.*

32) See *The Muslim*, July. 2, 1941, Sept.16, 1943, Sept.16, 1944.

33) See *ibid*.

34) For superstitions see Lawrence, *op.cit*, p.294. 'The whole Valley is rich in superstition and there is not a mountain, river, or spring which has not some quaint legend attached to it': 'The fair humanities of old religions; the power, the beauty, the majesty that had their haunts in dale or piny mountain or forest, by slow stream or pebbly spring or *chashem* and watery depths' *Ibid.*

35) For details see G.H. Khan, *Early Socio-Religious Reform Movements in Kashmir (Vide History of the Freedom Struggle in Jammu & Kashmir)*, pp.90-96.
36) *Ibid*, pp.96-109.
37) Belonging to the *Mirwaiz* family of Rajouri Kadal, Srinagar, Moulvi Rasool Shah was the foremost among the Kashmiri Muslims to realize the importance of modern education on Western lines. He laid the foundation of modern education in Kashmir for which he had to face the wrath and opposition of the fanatic *mullahs*, who not only raised violent agitation against his mission but also made attempts on his life. He faced the conservative challenge very boldly and endeavoured relentlessly to ensure that his school becomes the beacon-light of the Muslim emancipation in Kashmir.
38) See G.H. Khan, *loc.cit*.
39) *The Milap*, Lahore, May, 25, 1925. *The Arya Samaj* in Kashmir was represented by those Hindus who had come from Punjab as State employees and by those who had settled here for business purposes. *Census*, 1911, part I, pp.148, 211.
40) The change of the court language from Persian to Urdu in Partap Singh's reign rendered most of the Kashmiri Pandits jobless as they were not acquainted with the new language. This resulted in the influx of Punjabis, having proficiency in Urdu, to dominate the administration. F. Sec.E. (NAI), Jan.1891. Nos: 118-120.
41) 'The services mentality is very old among the Pandits. As clerks and accountants they have served the country throughout ages'. 'The great aspiration of a Pandit young man is to secure a Government job. From his very birth he is trained for "service". Mothers bless their sons, *purohits* their *jajmans* and all elders their young folk that they may get jobs and promotions. And the job usually aspired to is a clerkship in an office. I have yet to know a Kashmiri Pandit who would voluntarily give up a Government job, however, low to serve his country. This is slur on his patriotism'. (P.N. Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir*, p.283). 'As soon as they find that some other sections of the people are attempting to displace them from their present position in the office, they raise a terrific howl and until the danger goes out of sight they do not cease their propaganda which takes manifold forms'. *Ibid*, p. 285.
42) Vide F.M. Hassnain, *op.cit*, p.18.
43) See *The Tribune*, Aug.27, 1931.
44) *Cf.* Ishaq Khan, *op.cit*, p.171.
45) These petitions marked an important stage in the growth of public opinion.

46) The British Residency and the print media supported the Pandits. J.L. Kilam, *A History of Kashmiri Pandits*, pp.290-291.
47) *Ibid*.
48) F. Sec. (NAI), Feb. 1907, Nos: 163-164.
49) Speech dilvered by Saad-ud-Din Shawl at the second annual session of the *Anjuman-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam*. See, the official organ of the *Anjuman*, *Halat-o-Rou-i-Dad*, p.41.
50) *Ibid* (Munshi G.M. Khadim's speech).
51) P.N. Bazaz, *Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, p. 138. Also see, R.L. Handa, *Freedom Struggle In Princely States*, pp.249-250; Rasheed Tasir, *Tarikh-i-Hurriyat Kashmir*, pp.65-66, 71.
52) P.N. Bazaz, *loc.cit.*
53) The *Khalafat* Movement was very important; it created a great stir throughout India as Mr.Gandhi related the fate of Muslim Turks to that of Indian Muslims.
54) See Alastair Lamb, *op.cit*, pp.86-87.
55) The institution of *Mirwaiz* is peculiar to Kashmir and is, probably, to be found nowhere else in the Islamic world. There are two *Mirwaiz* in Srinagar; one based on the *Jama Masjid* who preaches *Hanifi* Islam; and the other on the Khankah-i-Mulla who professes *Shafi* Islam. The office is hereditary; but there 'would seem to be an appointive element in that the holder is in some manner confirmed by the Government'. These *Mirwaiz* continue to disagree on matters political as well as theological. *Ibid*, p.98, n.2; P.N. Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir*, p.119.
56) *Ibid*, p.86.
57) Vide F.M. Hassnain, *op.cit*, pp.25-26.
58) P.N. Bazaz, *loc.cit;* pp.252-253.

THE LABOUR TENSION—THE SILK FACTORY STRIKE

20

Tumhara zar hamara sar;
doo cheezon say bani hai mill;
nafa kay doo hesay karna;
barabar hai barabar hai.
—Ahmad Joo

(Oh Capitalist! bear in mind it is the working together of your capital and our skill that makes the factory so profitable. It is, therefore, the only logical thing to distribute the dividends equally.)

This poetic expression of Ahmad Joo, popularly known as Amma Baba Fateh Kadal Walla, [1] clearly reflects the change that had occurred in the heart and soul of the Kashmiris before the commencement of the revolt of 1931. Upholding the workmen's yearning desire to shape their own destiny, and denouncing with pugnacity the unequal distribution of wealth, it manifests the changing Kashmiri psyche that was growing restive to shuffle across a difficult path of rebellion.

A whole new concept of awakening was freshening up the Kashmiri minds and infusing them with a spirit of recalcitrance in the 20th century when various *Anjumans* [2] had come into being under the influence of newly founded Mission schools, hospitals, post and telegraph system[3]; when the opening of Jehlum Valley Cart Road[4] was bringing people closer to the ideas that were shaping the attitudes of the Indians against the British colonialism; when the

Western political concepts were gradually seizing the imagination of the Kashmiris, both Hindus and Muslims; when the outmoded beliefs were slowly, but imperceptibly, casting off the dead weight; and when the Pandits were gaining tremendous confidence as a result of the achievement of their ambition through their campaign for the *mulki* rights[5].

This consciousness, no doubt, symbolized a fragmented view of the society, but its common factor was the growing popular discontent with the policies of the Dogra regime; a composite formation that embodied the nascent agitational attitude in the matrix of a broader political culture. But the shadow of rather too parochial *mulki* objective obscured the prospects of achieving requisite social solidarity to form a joint Hindu-Muslim alliance against their common foe. It obtruded its ugly horns to put a real damper on the growing expectations of communal cohesion, and exposed what was cunningly concealed in the *mulki* demand.

The Pandits wanted a share in the State services which were practically reserved for the non-Kashmiris. In the name of general masses, they raised a hue and cry against the employment policy of the Government and continued to grumble till their *mulki* rights were recognized and the doors of the State services thrown open to them. While substantiating this, one of the most prominent Pandit leaders and prolific writers of the times, P.N. Bazaz writes:[6]

> Kashmiri Pandits demanded a change in the policy of Government. In the name of the people of Kashmir they protested against discrimination and unfair treatment. But

> while they spoke in the name of the people what they demanded was not for the benefit of the masses and the lower strata of the society, but for themselves. They wanted a share in the State services.

The Kashmiri Pandits were politic enough to calculate their relative advantage. They were very adept at making excuses for their personal gain and did not hesitate to make up their way through[7]:

Tel, bel, chieal
(Corrupt practices, lying, and deceit.)
And
Nalam, halam, ya kalam
(Lying, begging, or writing.)

The successful culmination of their *mulki* demand and the resultant absorption of their young men in the State services changed them into good propagandists for the Dogra regime; the staunch defenders of the autocratic Hindu rule and saboteurs of the popular Muslim aspirations. It resulted in their assimilation to the tradition of the exploiter; making them his real good stooges to inspire obedience.

It was no wonder, therefore, that they got a good return on their investment. Responsive to the wishes of its adulators and sycophants, the regime extended full patronage to the Pandits by giving them power to satiate their gluttonous appetite for worldly comforts; converting them into parasites with souls made of money; and with a mindset whose sole aim was personal aggrandizement. Walter Lawrence writes: [8]

> ....Kashmiri Pandits had power and authority, and Muslims... were forced to work to keep the idle Brahmans in comfort.

They gained ample economic stability, political power and social status which, subsequently, so enhanced their influence that they could easily subvert any attempt aimed at reducing their subsidies and concessions.[9] According to Walter Lawrence: [10]

> The secret of the cheap *shali* [was] because if the prices were allowed to rise to its proper level the whole body of Pandits would compel the palace to yield to their demands.

He further adds:

> The Pandits had a right to be well fed whether there [was] famine or not at two *Chilki* rupees a kharwar[11]... The cultivator [was] considered to have rights neither to his land nor to his crops.[12]

This uncontrolled and unprecedented transgression and violation of human rights and social equilibrium paved the way for cracks to develop in the traditional ethos of Kashmir which manifested themselves in an unbridgeable gulf between the two sides of its population; one represented by less then 01% richly rewarded parasites and idle comfort-seekers and the other by over 99% poverty afflicted producers of wealth. Disturbing psychologically and emotionally the externally quiet masses—the undefended cultivators, unprotected workmen, the impoverished weavers and the unemployed youth— the situation was volatile enough to reinforce the public hatred for the enslaving bureaucracy, and for the disreputable political methods of the Pandit community.

Thus, the Kashmir history was slowly preparing the ground for new political experiments. It was, by degrees, melting into newer scenes. And by 1924A.D., the feelings of both communal and class consciousness had become too visible to propel the Kashmiris along the road of agitation. Some spark had to ignite the crises; it was the meager wages of the workmen of the State owned Silk Factory[13]. The pressure was multiplied by a phenomenal growth in its profits which had gone up to 25 lakhs of *rupees* a year[14]. The management, comprising Pandits, was in no mood to enhance the wages which were mere four and half *annas* per head per day, a portion of which was pocketed by it for itself.

The increasing profits of the Factory fully justified the workers demand for a revision of wages. But the management turned down the demand on one pretext or the other, and tried to reduce workmen to silence by employing the routine business methods which they refused to abide by. The management ignored the demand.

It was, however, a tactical error of the management to calculate the demand as insignificant and to ignore it altogether. A blunt refusal to discuss the issue was even more annoying. The official arrogance so enraged the workmen, who came mostly from the suburbs of Srinagar, that they decided to go on all-out strike.

Not realizing the dimensions of the growing labour unrest, the Government failed to conceive that the workmen would observe strike which even the people could not believe was possible. The unrest had assumed a new proportion. The workmen's misery had now crossed the limit. Frustration was writ large on their faces. The Factory premises presented a scene of turbulent emotions. The entire work had come to a stand still.

The workmen "assumed a defiant and threatening attitude and refused to work and to carry out the orders of the Director. They went so far as to appoint their own officers from among their ranks".[15] It was at this critical juncture that the government started sensing trouble and decided to act. Twenty five of the twenty seven labour leaders were arrested on the charges of fomenting trouble in the Factory.[16]

This action was even more provocative to lit the fire of upsurge. The workmen now took out a procession in which even the children participated. They openly attacked the Government by chanting Amma Baba's revolutionary song and by waving banners displaying anti- establishment feelings. A big crowd of 2000 proceeded towards Shergarhi where they tried in vain to enter the police station. However, they declined to leave until their leaders were not released.[17]The sheer magnitude of the resistance so completely unnerved the authorities that they deployed both infantry and cavalry to suppress it with violence.[18] Still, the agitators were in no mood to yield. They continued defending their position against the disreputable business methods of an unreliable management; forcing it to increase their wages, though minutely.[19]

Hitting the entire city unprecedentedly, this labour unrest was an epoch-making event in the evolution of organized opposition to the Dogra rule. Unlike the earlier outbursts of the *shawl-bafs*, it became a collective social action by gaining a large number of supporters for the workmen's cause, and inspired the unemployed skilled labour, the weavers, the *paper machie* artists and the educated unemployed Muslim youth to join hands with the agitators.[20] Even some religious organizations extended their full support to the movement[21] and the volunteers of *Anjuman-i-Hamdard Islam* participated in the procession, demonstrations and protest meetings organized by the work men.[22] Babu Ibrahim , the president of the *Anjuman* was forced by the Government to leave the State territories.[23]

The State Silk Factory strike, thus, brought the conditions of the Kashmiri Muslims into focus and encouraged many prominent members of the community to present a memorandum to the Viceroy of India, Lord Reading, when he visited Srinagar in October 1924A.D.[24] The memorandum outlined their grievances and a catalogue of reform; a strategy that became the core of their political thinking and social action hence-forth.

REFRENCES AND NOTES

1) A resident of Fateh Kadal, Srinagar, Amma Baba, the grandpa of the author, was a revolutionary in his own right. Educated at an indigenous school, called *tsatahal*, he had mastered various Persian works notably *Karima, Bostan and Gulistan*. He knew Arabic also. He had gained considerable proficiency in the art of writing and teaching. Initially, he taught students under his own roof but for economic considerations he had to give up teaching and pursue weaving as a full time occupation. He became very popular for his humorous poetic compositions through which he would often express what he observed in his surroundings. He has portrayed the hospitality of Duroo Shahbad as under:

Dooda rus chai chaee Shahbad Duris;
henae aas waran puris munz

2) For *Anjumans* see chapter, *Of Prayers and Petitions.*
3) *Ibid.*
4) *Ibid.*
5) *Ibid.*
"The Pandits, a common term in Cashmere for Brahmans, are the only persons who give much heed to education, and in their caste, study is generally prompted by the hope of office, they being the class on whom the Government and the merchants depend for clerks and accountants..."Girdlestone, *Memorandum*, p.9
6) P.N. Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir*, p.97.
7) *Cf.* Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p.282.
8) Lawrence, *India We Served.*
9) Bazaz's observations clearly point to a contradiction between their pretensions and the actualities of their disposition, besides to an alteration they wanted their masters to make in the recruitment policy to their full advantage. By raising the bogey of *mulki* in the name of masses, they made a profitable investment for a good return and deceived both the Hindu Dogra ruler and his Kashmiri Muslim subjects by their affectations and clever camouflage. For achieving their main objective of becoming the protégés of the regime; the essential key components of the administration; and to get for themselves the profession of teaching or of a clerk, they would go to any extent to appease the Dogra regime. They would'nt even hesitate to browbeat the establishment into accepting their demands to the detriment of the Muslim interest.

10) Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p.272.
11) *Ibid.*
12) *Ibid.*
13) .The Silk is an old industry of Kashmir. "Nothing, however, is known about its origin beyond the fact that it is intimately connected with that of Bukhara with which it has always had interchange of seed and silk". (N.G. Mukerji). Vide Walter Lawrence, *loc.cit* p.367. After 1846-1925A.D., the Industry was revived on scientific lines, particularly when the *kani shawl* industry suffered a decline. The Factory was built on the left bank of the Dudh Ganga River and it employed about 5000 workmen. P.N.K Bamzai, *op. cit.*
14) *Ibid.*
15) During the period of post-war boom (1919-1929 A.D.), the State Silk Factory made huge profits. M. Ganju, *Textile Industries in Kashmir*, p.173. Also see P.N.K. Bamzai, *op.cit*, p.205.
16) Abdul Ahad, *Kashmir to Frankfurt.*
17) F. M. Hassnain, *op.cit*; p. 19.
18) Abdul Ahad, *loc. cit.*
19) Alastair Lamb; *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy*; p. 87.
20) Abdul Ahad; *lo.cit.*
21) *History of the Freedom Struggle in Kashmir*: pp.103-104.
22) *Ibid.*
23) *Ibid.*
24) See chapter, *Of Prayers and Petitions.*

THE REVOLT—THE MASSACRE OF 1931

21

Leave toying with kettle drums.
Let there be thunder storm and tempest.
Yes an earth quake.
—Mahjoor

It took many years' patience and perseverance for the Kashmiris to build the whole edifice of political opposition to the autocratic rule. They built it brick by brick; layer by layer; each layer making an important phase in its edification. Whatever the variations, the sole interlinking principle of these phases was the growing awareness about the miserable conditions of the people, and a strong desire to change these to reduce poverty and to create an environment that would ensure the fulfillment of religious aspirations of the people. The *hartals* observed by the shawl weavers to air their anger against the callousness of *dag-i-shawl;*[1] the petitions presented to the authorities for the protection of the religious places and for the validation of newly founded schools;[2] and the labour tensions that surfaced for an increase in the wages[3] are the vital linkages of the evolution of political opposition in Kashmir which exposed the centuries old wrong doings of the ruling clique and never-melting perfidious character of its henchmen.

But the impact of Silk Factory strike was far greater; it resulted in building a fearless, matured and organized opposition by breaking the silence, and the isolationist attitude of the masses.[4] It inspired the Muslim elite to come to the forefront to articulate public grievances in a fairly effective manner. As a result, they showed considerable understanding approach towards the people's problems when they presented a memorandum to the Viceroy and demanded, besides other things, a State Constitution, a Legislative Assembly with Muslim representation, land reforms and equitable distribution of Government contracts[5].

Failing to appreciate the changing public mood and the throbbing pulse of the elite, the Government adopted a lackadaisical approach to these demands and dismissed them as unfounded and unsavory[6]. Infuriatingly, it pounced on the elite; charged them with sedition; confiscated their properties; and expelled them from the country[7]. The common people too were not spared; their righteous indignation was suppressed with not only baton charges but also by augmenting their poverty through systematic corruption and exploitation, and by hurting their sensitivities. As a result, Kashmir presented an extremely intolerable atmosphere, hostile to the majority community who constituted more than 99 percent of the total population of the Valley. Prejudice, discrimination and the invidious attitude of the ruling clique filled the community with dismay and discontent, and made the situation so disgusting that in March 1929 A.D., Sir Albion Banerji resigned the post of Foreign Political Minister which he had held for over two years[8]. He made it public through press that he could no longer be associated with the misgovernment of the Dogra regime. While castigating it, he observed:[9]

> Jammu and Kashmir State is labouring under many disadvantages, with a large

> Muhammedan population absolutely illiterate, labouring under poverty and very low economic condition of living in the villages and practically governed like dumb driven cattle. There is no touch between the Government and the people, no suitable opportunity for representing grievances and the administrative machinery itself requires overhauling from top to bottom to bring it up to the modern conditions of efficiency. It has at present no sympathy with the people's wants and grievances.

Not caring two hoots what an experienced, matured and foresighted politician of Banerji's caliber outlined in his press statement, the Government continued to enforce the anti-Muslim policy even more vigorously than before. The most disheartening features of this policy were:

> The denial of an average livelihood to weavers, and[10] the promotion of a preponderance of the Hindus, both the Kashmiris and the non-Kashmiris, in the State service to the detriment of newly returned young local Muslim graduates, post-graduates and diploma holders from outside educational institutions[11] ; quite a few of whom conceived of a talk-shop (a gossip center which, subsequently, became a discussion forum, known as Reading Room Party) at Fateh Kadal on 12 April, 1930 A.D., where they indulged in ribald

> humour and occasionally exchanged ideas on issues like unemployment that had afflicted their community;[12] the preference given to the non-Muslims in the relief dispensation during natural calamities[13] and other emergencies; the perpetration of hardships against the Muslim contractors, craftsmen, artisans, peasants and villagers[14]; the patronage to corruption that pushed the masses to starvation;[15] the callous disregard for Islamic susceptibilities, shrines and places of worship.[16]

The situation was extremely bad. The entire Valley was seething with discontent. A deep hatred for the extant order of things was preparing a ground for subtle interplay of historical forces to set Kashmiris against the misrule. It was a matter of time before they could embark on the task of improving their lot.

However, a few reasonable and moderate opinions, in the whole lot of insolent, incompetent and inhuman ruling race, could foresee how things would turn out to their discomfiture if remedial measures were not taken in time. Sheikh Abdul Aziz and General Samunder Khan, the non-Kashmiri Muslim members of the *Dogra Sabha* were most notable among them who impressed on the Government the importance of changing its policy to stem the rising tide.[17] But it could not think beyond constituting the Civil Services Recruitment Board to assuage the deep longing of the Muslims for a fair deal.[18]

Apparently the Board was constituted to redress the grievances of the Muslims, but surprisingly it had no

Muslim member.[19] Also the rules of its business, and recruitment procedures were framed strictly and unfairly to the prejudice of the Muslim interest. These were too harsh to encourage their representation in the State services.[20] For all practical purposes, thus, the Government deliberately prevaricated over the whole issue.The Board turned out to be a complete joke that gave a nasty jolt to the Reading Room Party which vainly tried to find favour with it by persuading it to modify the rules. To the Party's utter dismay, the Board showed reluctance to even remove the rider of competitive test that was not at all in vogue till then.[21] The hapless Party had to eat a humble pie. It wore a haggard and disappointed look after its unfulfilled mission and ambition.

The Desecration of Quran

The Board's stubborness did not provoke any immediate public reaction; but history was nevertheless imperceptibly working up to shatter their silence lest it might assume the proportions of a cowardly behaviour. It was shaping a series of significant events to expose the squalor of bitter hatred and malice of the Hindu rulers towards their Muslim subjects buried beneath a deep pile carpet of the Dogra regime. The foremost among these was the prohibition imposed on preaching sermon; the *khutba*; the most essential part of the *nimaz* offered on the auspicious occasions of *Id* and Friday prayers.

It was 29, April, 1931A.D., the *Id* day that a police sub-inspector, Khem Chand prevented the *imam* from delivering *khutba* in the city of Jammu. The congregation felt deeply affronted at this.[22] The incident sent terrible shock waves throughout the length and breadth of the

Maharaja's territories.

The Muslims had not yet come out of this shock when it was reported that at the Government's instigation a series of anti-Muslim incidents had occurred in Jammu. The most conspicuous among these were:

> *Tohhin -i-* Quran, the defilemet of the Quran at the police lines, Jammu where a head constable, Labha Ram insulted the Holy Book while it was being recited by a Junior constable in his room;[23] the closure of a premises and an adjacent tank at village Digore, Jammu for the Muslim congregation;[24] and the demolition of a mosque at Riasi, Jammu.[25]

Whatever the variations, the essential components common to these incidents were: insult to Quran; contempt for religious places; and the disrespect for Muslim traditions. The news of these incidents spread like a wild fire, the flames of which travelled to Srinagar to convert the city into a roaring inferno.[26] The pulpits of mosques, both major and minor, made an overwhelming spectre of fiery denunciations.[27] Durgah Hazratbal and *Jama Masjid*[28] were thronged with irate protesters who formed huge processions to make their way down the city to proclaim too loudly their collective concern and determination to protect and preserve the sanctity of Islam at any cost.

The Muslims of all opinions and shades joined hands to form a united alliance against the silly behaviour of their Hindu rulers. Transcending their group and sectarian differences, the *Sunnis,* the *Shias*, the *Hanfis*, the *Shafis,* the *Wahabis* and the *Ahmadiyas* let out their anger as one community in an all-embracing manner.[29] The two *Mirwaiz*, the traditional rivals, agreed to forgo their mutual differences for the sake of greater cause of the community.[30]

Cutting across traditional boundaries of differences, the head of the *Ahmadiyas*, Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mehmood issued a directive to his followers in Kashmir to join hands with the protesters. The directive reads: [31]

> For the past many years, I have been studying the conditions of Muslims in Kashmir and have come to this conclusion that until they rise to offer sacrifices, nothing would be achieved for their betterment .... All of us, whether belonging to upper or lower strata, must join to tell Maharaja that we are all one and united, that we all stand behind the Kashmiri Muslims and that we will, in no case tolerate any injustice to our Muslim brothers and sisters.

Likewise, the leaders of other groups of Muslims echoed the similar consciousness and exhorted their followers to unite to assert the claim of the whole community. This consciousness asserted itself even more forcefully in July, 1931, when a large number of people assembled in the open compound of Khankah-i-Mulla, the shrine of Amir-i-Kabir, to protest against the Jammu incidents.[32] An observable strength of public passions forced the senior Muslims to call off the protest meeting on the understanding that they would petition the Maharaja for equal respect to the Islamic susceptibilities of the people of Kashmir. This was an obsolete technique not to the liking of many. The protesters who were ready to disperse took back to their seats when one Abdul Qadeer, a Muslim cook in the entourage of Major Bott, a British officer, suddenly appeared on the platform and in his own persuasive manner cast a spell on them.[33] He delivered a speech that was even more spicy than his cuisine and lit the fire of a mass upsurge; sending passions soaring. Firing up the Muslim concerns he said:[34]

> The honour, respect and reverence of the Holy Quran are dearer to the Muslims than the kingdom of the world. They will never tolerate any interference in their religion or defilement of their Holy Book. Oh, Muslims arise; time has come when you should reply with stones against the bricks. I warn you that your representatives and memorials can not come to your rescue, nor will these papers remove injustice. You must stand on your own legs and fight against autocratic force. Even if you have no arms, continue your fight with sticks and stones.

The entire complex of the gigantic mosque of Khankah-i-Mulla reverberated with the piercing noise of the first shot of the revolt fired by a Kashmiri Muslim of Gutli Bagh, a locality inhabited by the people of Pathan origin. An eyewitness account of the whole Qadeer episode reads, thus:[35]

> The audience ....listened to Qadeer's words very attentively. While making the speech, it could not be difficult to gather that he was sufficiently literate and politically conscious. He asked the people to prepare themselves for the struggle against tyranny and oppression of the feudal lords, free themselves from the shackles of the Maharaja's disposition at any cost...His each and every word left deep and indelible impact on their minds.

While Qadeer's sensational speech greatly endeared him to the masses, it provoked an angry reaction from the authorities who promptly arrested him on charges of sedition under section 124 and 125 of Ranbir Panel Code.[36] This action of the Government added fuel to the fire; it gained even more public sympathy in his favour and, thereby, acted as a stimulant to further uproar; keeping the pot boiling more intensely than before.

Fraught with many potential implications that changed the course of events, Qadeer's arrest shifted the focus away from a narrow repertoire to a wider spectrum of communal interests that formed the basis of the Muslim identity of Kashmir. It was a rare phenomenon that gave entirely a new dimension to public anger and, subsequently, transformed it into an organized opposition and a political movement of considerable significance.

To show complete solidarity with Qadeer, the people came out on the streets; obstructing traffic on the way every time he was brought for trial to the Session's Court and taken back to the prison; and, thus, making it increasingly difficult for the authorities to control the situation.[37] Even the Court premises presented noisy scenes during the course of four hearings on July 6, 7, 8 and 9, 1931. Filled with the apprehensions of law and order problem, the Government shifted the venue of next hearing to the Srinagar Central Jail and fixed 13 July as day of trial which was kept a guarded secret.[38]

The most crucial key feature of the Qadeer episode, this official decision leaked out somehow and nearly seven thousand Kashmiris gathered at the Jail gate on the fateful day.[39] On failing to catch a glimpse of their hero, they tried to force their way inside the gate; infuriating, thus, the District Magistrate on the spot to make several arrests; especially of frontline protestors.[40] This action triggered off the violent protests on an unprecedented scale; forcing the enraged mob to reply with stones; a technique Qadeer had taught them on 25 June at Khankah-i-Mulla.

This wrathful public response was rather an unnerving experience for the authorities; for it was the first popular street challenge to the Dogra regime which they met with police baton charges, to begin with, and with bullets subsequently.[41] The cost, however, was extremely high; as many as twenty two unarmed Kashmiris were massacared in a jiffy;[42] many times more were wounded in the melee.

Not cowed into submission by a volley of shots fired over their heads, the mob defiantly entered the Jail and picked *charpoys* for carrying the dead and the wounded. The blood-oozing corpses laid out on these *charpoys* were paraded through the main markets of the city; the sight unseen before brought out public indignation which resulted in the first mass communal violence at Maharaj

Gung, Vicharnag and Nowshehar where riot after riot caused immense loss of life and property.[43] The city was handed over to the army whose arrogance accentuated the situation. They resorted to indiscriminate firing at Nawabazar; killing several persons and wounding many, besides arresting over three hundred Kashmiris and looting some well-to-do Muslim houses.[44]

In suppressing the agitators, the Dogras were helped **by their Hindu subjects, both indigenous and outsiders,[45] who were hostile to the Muslim cause from the beginning. This was a crucial factor that contributed to the outburst of communal riots.**

The change in the Kashmiri mindset did not occur in isolation; rather it was the boon companion of suffering and sacrifice made by the unknown heroes in the process of their struggle against the odds. The circumstances forced them to transcend the boarder of humanity by treading on some people to create an environment of happiness for the ordinary masses. The road to achieve the end was so harsh, so bitter and so rough that it could not be traversed without clearing the blocks. The communal clashes were, therefore, unavoidable in the given situation which had emasculated the Kashmiris for a pretty long time, on the one hand, and emboldened the Hindu *Janta* and regime to expand their net of Muslim-bashing, on the other. P. N. Bazaz, an eyewitness substantiates this contention, though with some ambiguity, when he observes:[46]

> Indifferent and sometimes positively inimical and unnecessarily hostile and indiscriminate attitude of the Hindus towards both nationalistic and

> communalistic aspirations of the Muslims was by no means an insignificant factor in developing the movement on these dangerous lines.

Never had before Kashmir witnessed such a forceful upsurge. It was a new trend towards the assertion of Muslim identity; a profound departure from the earlier protests; a complete farewell to the traditional stoicism. It stirred the masses, i.e the Muslims, who constituted over ninety percent of the population, to anger that weighed heavily against their sectarian differences and urban-rural and social divide. It taught all shades and opinions not to imagine themselves as separate and independent of an all-embracing Muslim identity which, subsequently, began echoing more vibrantly with the assistance and guidance of the Central Kashmir Committee, Lahore established at the behest of emigrant Kashmiris, who had settled at Sialkot, Amritsar and Lahore, and with the blessings of Sir Muhamad Iqbal.

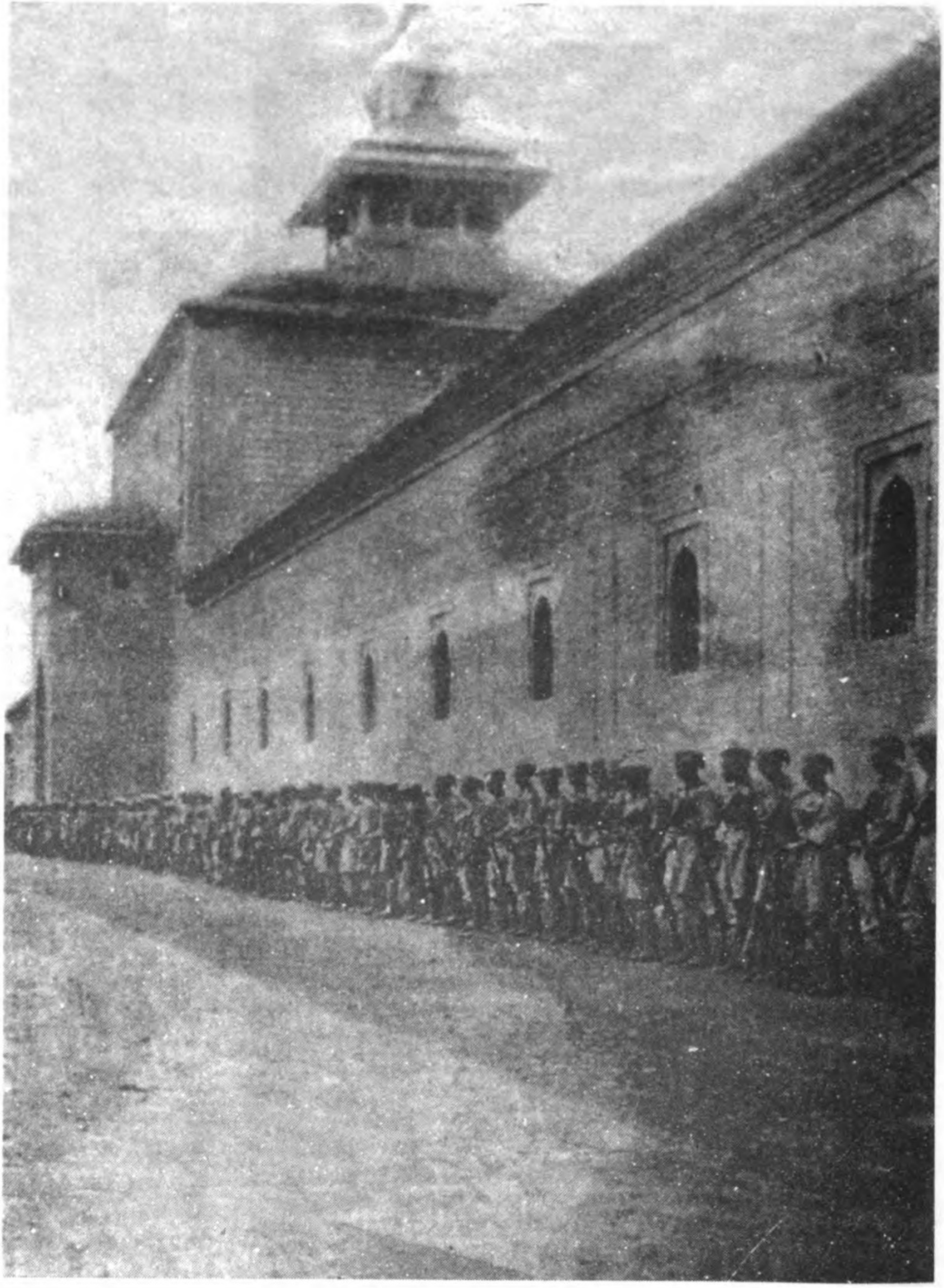
The July massacre compelled the Hindu Dogra regime to appoint a Commission of Enquiry, known as Galancy Commission, with two Muslims and two Hindus as its members, which gave a Constitution to the State supported by the idea of forming associations.

REFERENCES & NOTES

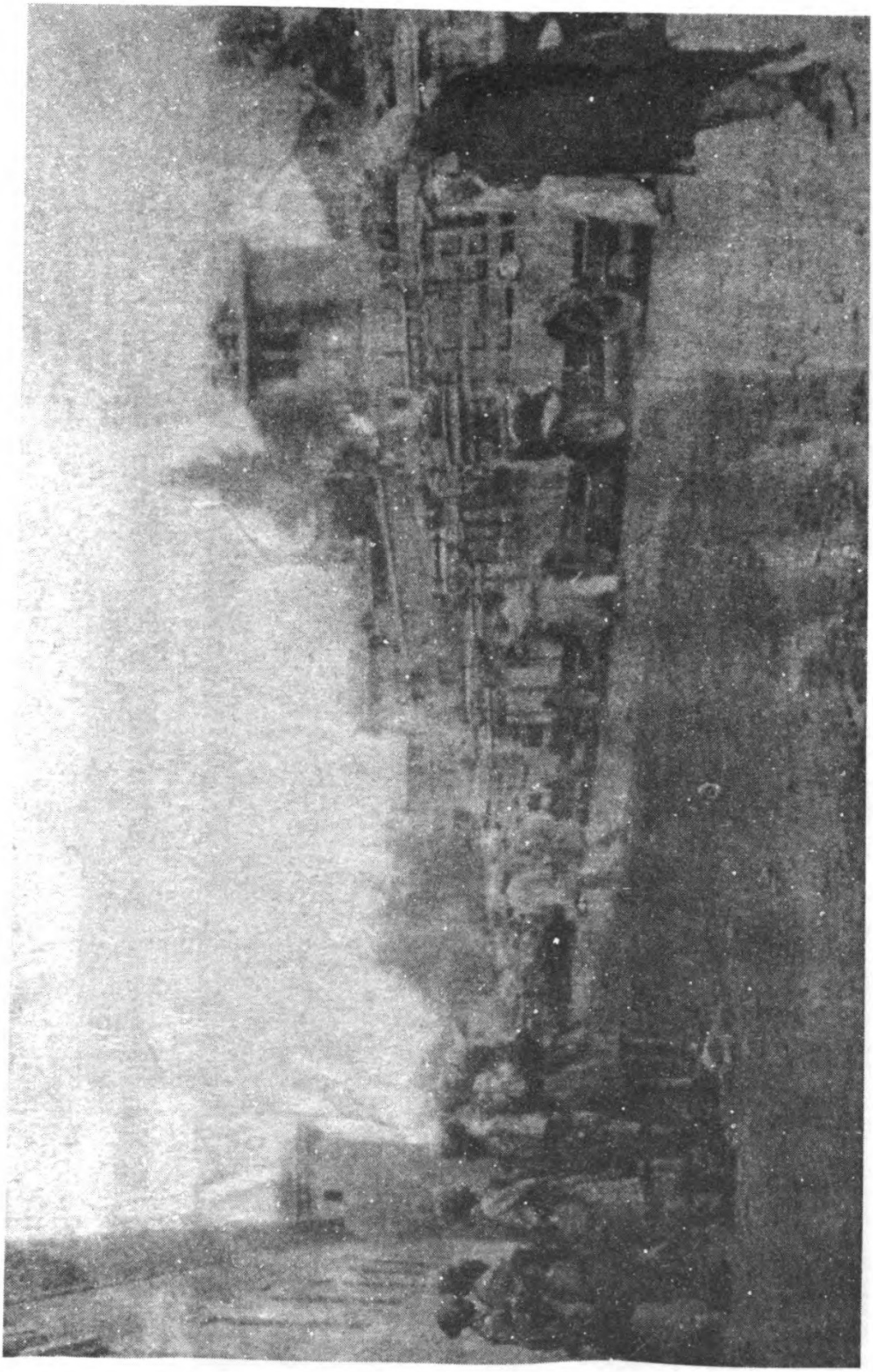
1) For shawl weaver's *hartals* see *The Ripples of Growing Unrest. Dag-i-shawl* was the department which levied and realized the shawl tax. The officer in charge of the department was called *darogah*. He supervised over the shawl-manufacturing with the help of about 200 officials. For details see Abdul Ahad, *Kashmir to Frankfurt*. P. N. K. Bamzai, *Socio-Economic History of Kashmir*, p. 217, n.17.
2) See chapter, *Of Prayers and Petitions.*
3) See chapter, *Labour Tensions.*
4) See chapter, *The Ripples of Growing Unrest.*
5) Alastair Lamb, *op.cit;* p. 87. Also see *Of Prayers and Petitions.*
6) *Ibid.*
7) *Ibid.*
8) Alastair Lamb, *op. cit,* p. 88; P. N. Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir,* p. 88; M. Y. Saraf, *Kashmir Fights- Vol.1,* p.349.
9) *Ibid.*
10) See *chapter, The Rule of Thumb Ruled The Roost.*
11) Some young Kashmiri Muslims were encouraged to study at Lahore and Aligarh during 1920A.D., when some emigrant Kashmiri Muslims, settled at Sialkot, Amritsar and Lahore, came forward to offer them scholarships through their association, called Kashmir Committee. By the beginning of 1930 A.D., most of them had returned to the Valley to augment the ranks of unemployed Muslims.
12) 'Reading Room Party' formed by these youngmen was nothing but a gossip centre where they indulged in ribald humour. Probably it was owing to this, that Mirwaiz Ahmad Ullah did not extend his support to the centre. The centre played no role in July 1931 revolt as generally presumed.
13) They were drowned in Wular. See *chapter, The Rule of Thumb Ruled The Roost.*
14) *Ibid.*
15) *Ibid.*
16) *Ibid.*
17) P. N. Bazaz, *loc. cit,* p. 99.
18) *Ibid,* pp 100-102.
19) This Board replaced the one that had been in existence for some time to select Hindu candidates for scholarships to prosecute their studies in foreign countries. *Ibid,* p.101.
20) *Ibid.*
21) *Ibid,* p. 102.

22) *Ibid*, p. 120.
23) *Ibid*, pp.120-121.
24) *Ibid*, p.121.
25) *Ibid*.
26) P.N. Bazaz, *op.cit*, p.120
27) Alastair Lamb, *loc.cit*, p. 89
28) P. N. Bazaz, *lo.cit*, pp. 123-124
29) *Ibid*; p.125. The Jammu incidents provided, writes Bazaz, "the slogan, Islam in danger" which was raised in every part of the country by the Muslims. All sectional differences were relegated to the background.
30) Both of the irreconcilable *Mirwaiz* appeared on the same plateform. Mirwaiz Yousuf Shah entered the precincts of the Khankah-i-Mulla which neither he nor perhaps his forefathers had done before. Even Moulvi Abdullah, the *Mirzai* was present. *Ibid*.
31) Afzal Qadian,dated 16 June, 1931; quoted in F.M. Hassnain,*op.cit*, p. 42
32) *Cf.* P.N. Bazaz, *loc.cit*
33) Abdul Qadeer was a resident of Gutli Bagh, Ganderbal, Srinagar.This fact was revealed by his son, who lives in Islamabad, Pakistan, in an interview with a news paper, *Greater Kashmir*. Also compare *ibid*, p. 126; F.M.Hassnain, *op.cit*, p. 42
34) *Ibid*, p. 43; Rasheed Taseer;*Tarikh-i-Hurriyat-i-Kashmir*, p. 96
35) G.N. Aijaz, *Roots of The Kashmir Freedom Movement*, Kashmir Today, Feb, March, 1978.
36) *Ibid;* Alastair Lamb, *op.cit*, p. 80
37) *Cf.* P.N. Bazaz, *loc.cit*, p. 126
38) *Ibid*.
39) *Ibid*, p.128
40) *Cf. ibid*, p. 129
41) *Ibid*.
42) *Cf. ibid*. F.M. Hassnain has furnished a list of 27 persons killed on the occasion. o*p.cit*, pp. 48-49
43) P.N. Bazaz, *loc.cit*.
44) F.M. Hassnain, *loc.cit*.
45) *Ibid*.
46) P.N. Bazaz, *loc.cit*,p. 132

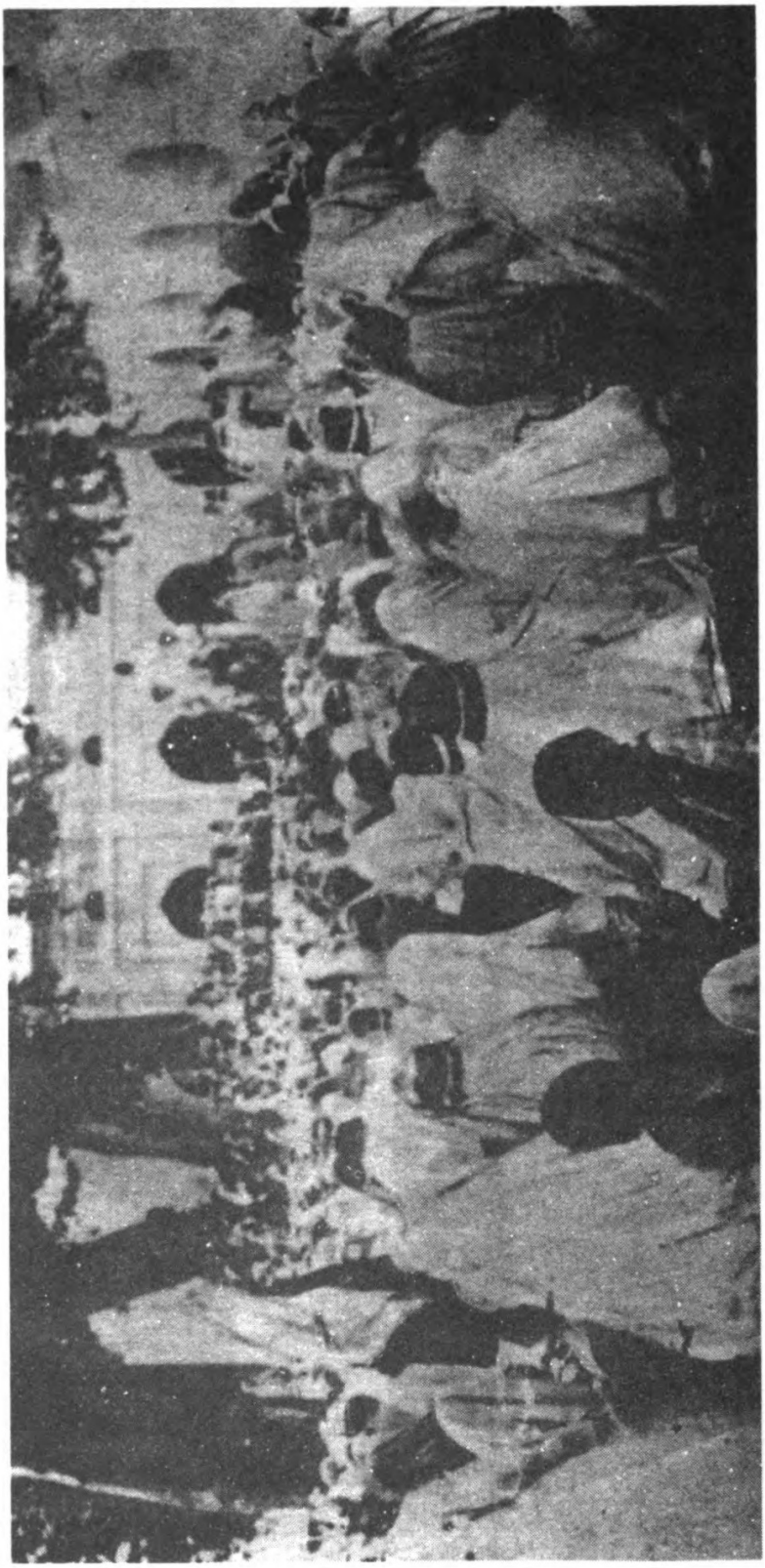
Dogra Soldiers on full alert to disperse the agitators, July, 1931



Jama Masjid under siege, July, 1931

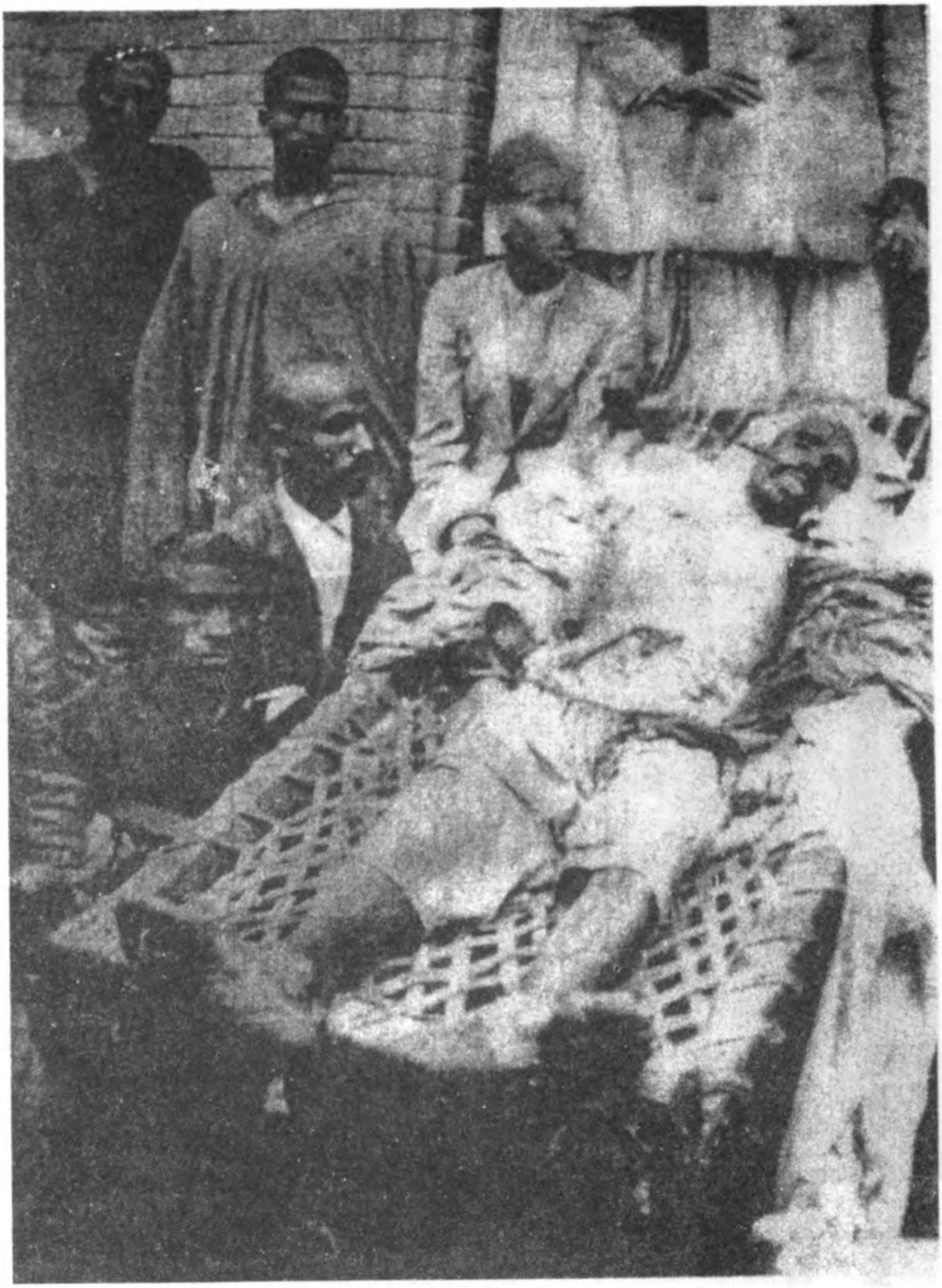


Dogra troops deployed to quell the revolt, July, 1931



Kashmiri women in a state of mourning, *Jama Masjid*, July, 1931

The great massacre, July, 1931



Body of an agitator, July, 1931

Body of an agitator for last rites, July, 1931

EPILOGUE

Kashmir owes it to its remote ancestor, Nila Naga, to bestow on her what she required to become a heaven on earth; a celestial beauty that surpasses the most spectacular scenic view imaginable in the world. He was the foremost Kashmiri to conceive of a society in the womb of *Satisar* which had become a den of devious and devilish *Pissacas*; a most difficult place inhospitable enough to welcome human settlements. His creative genius had no cotemporaneous parallel in history. His specific contributions and great daring adventures cast a shadow on the growing influence of the *Pissaca* chief and ejected his wicked tribe to lay foundations of the Kashmir kingdom; giving it its inner strength and all the ingredients necessary for the establishment of an independent State; for its various cultural formations; and for the growth of its indomitable historical personality.

The sole integrating principle of this personality was the homogeneity of the *Nagas* and their fierce determination to make Kashmir a safe abode for their progeny. They shaped the socio-economic institutions of the newly founded society and provided it religious and political organization which remained consistent with the aspects of historical culture that developed to accord legitimacy to Kashmir's individuality.

Over a period of time the Kashmiris constantly endeavoured to sharpen their mental antecedents and skills to make possible their transformation from the household economy to the market economy and from the village to the sedentary life style. Vicissitudes of history and hardships of geography least disturbed their momentum. Unfailingly, they continued showing their concern and remarkable endurance and firm resolve to make their personality an all-encompassing expression of the Kashmiri society.

The Harwan and the Hutmur cultural formations were the hallmarks of this expression; the peak periods of Kashmir's social engineering, artistic refinement, matchless sedentarization, architectural triumph and local ingenuity, the imprints of which make an indelible impression on visitors even today.

The indigenous fertile mind became the vital component of the *Koushur* heritage which enjoyed a great reputation, for a long period of time, for the vision and genius of scholars, poets and writers whose quest for knowledge set the imagination of people aflame and intensified their yearning to traverse all the heights of everlasting glory; an aspiration that was fulfilled in a far greater measure than expected and found expression in the huge structures raised at Martand, Avantipora and *Parihasapura* with such an intricate artistic manoeuvring that puzzles the modern onlookers immensely.

But this prosperity began to melt-down amongst a crowed of petty imbecile kings who played havoc with the Kashmir's economy by dissipating its resources on pleasure-seeking; and in the air of political wilderness and social anarchy perpetrated by a fickle multitude of power-seekers, pretenders and conspirators, and the Mongol intruders. The entire Kashmir got, thus, bogged down in a floundering morass of despair and confusion till the Crescent began to restore and rejuvenate the public confidence, and to rekindle the people's interest in socio-economic renovation and political reorganization.

Islam gave a fresh impetus and colour to the Kashmiri personality and enriched the contents of its individuality by embellishing it with the lace and ribbon of advanced technology, economy, agriculture and politics. An elaborate social engineering programme and intense rehabilitation and reorganization plan, based on *Karkhana* system, undertaken to help mitigate the effects of devastation caused by external forces, earned Islam a lot of public goodwill and adherents.

Islam transmitted the *Sufi* blood into the artery vein of the Kashmiri personality; making it a rich assortment of compatible opinions. It broadened the size and comprehension of its mind and greatly added to its importance in the formation of Kashmiri identity. The Islamic legacy became, thus, a pedestal basin of the indigenous thought and vision, and did not object to their relationship to past complexes and translated conceptual ambiguities into institutional patterns which inspired a *de facto* separation of politics and religion and persuaded the Sultanate to maintain a distance from the *Khalafat;* an institution that integrated the State and religion into an inseparable whole. It encouraged the venerable Kashmiris of the time to come to the fore to give an ideological quality and a unique character to the Kashmiri ethos; making it more rational and people friendly. It provided internal cohesion and stability which made Kashmir's independence more firmly entrenched as the basis of its material prosperity and social and spiritual good.

But Kashmir could not always remain on the sunny side of the hedge. Smiles of fortune, peace, stability and prosperity began retiring from the sight when the Sultanate became virtually ineffective to fulfill its political role; when it lost its institutional luster under the lumpish Sultans who were completely insensitive to public suffering; and when small cracks started appearing in the whole social fabric of the Valley to polarize the public opinion on sectarian issues. The frequency of conflicts, conspiracies and usurpations, and overindulgence of rulers in debauchery stripped Kashmir of its vitality and cohesiveness and provided an opportunity to the alien *Sayyids* to emerge as a new politico-religious force; an abyss of despair that encircled the entire Valley and disintegrated the historical form of its collective personality to make it docile and submissive.

A host of these developments had devastating consequences which not only infringed the *Sufi* authority but also prompted the elite, the *ulama* and the religious intelligentsia to seek foreign help to promote their petty parochial interests. Kashmir, thus, lost its independence. This loss was mainly because of the naivety, short sightedness and polarization of the Kashmiri mind rather than the superiority of the Mughal forces. It exposed the Kashmiris to a total and perpetual subjugation and to its attendant constraints which slowly throttled their personality beyond human imagination.

The savageries of subjugation sucked Kashmir dry; leaving behind memories of shabby tyrannies ranging from absolutism to brazen savagery; from autocracy to new-style colonialism; different only in their apparatus of repression.

A too long and hot spell of four hundred and twenty years of Kashmir's occupation tells the woeful tale of bitter centuries; each century presenting a gloomy picture of intimidation, oppression, persecution, exploitation and terrorism. Commencing with the onset of the Mughal

Imperium, based on the use of flogging and lashing formula as a part payment of remuneration for the services rendered by the Kashmiri artisans, the story passes through an undifferentiated mass of eras of great culture shock, vandalism, *bebuj-raj* and brazen savagery when:

> Mothers dared not outdoors and shaved the heads of their daughters for fear of molestation; when plucking of a head was much easier than plucking a flower; when the position of people was worst than chattels; when the butchers were publicly hanged for cow-slaughter; when the children were conscripted into *begar*; when the Kashmiris were drowned in Wular during famines; when they were forced to pay *nikah* tax; when the *azan* was banned and mosques closed and converted into store houses; when the men were denied livelihood and the women coerced into the white slave-trade and prostitution; and when everything, including cow dung but excluding air and water, was taxed.

The story does not end here; it moves further to unfold the political scrounge and secret deals that accentuated the wedding of the Kashmir territories with an incompatible partner, and to reveal the scourge of the Indian terrorism fostered by its *Hindutva* consciousness which, despite the noise and chaos of freedom fighters, continues unabated to augment the number of martyrs, orphans, widows and disappeared persons.

The systematic constriction of life in Kashmir on a rough deal provoked angry reactions at various periods of history which, though suppressed at fell swoop, paved the way for organized protests that marked the beginning of political opposition to the alien rule.

This opposition grew up by stages in response to the socio-religious demands of the people and political configuration of the Valley. The Zaldagar Uprising, Prayers and Petitions, Labour Tensions and Massacre of 1931 marked the important phases in the evolution of organized opposition in Kashmir which remained modest in its political aspirations and never indulged in speculations about independence and freedom. Its main focus was on:

> The improvement of the lot of the masses; the restoration of mosques and shrines; the protection of religious beliefs and communal practices; the abolition of *begar*; the employment of educated youth and the building of resistance to the minority perfidy.

This opposition helped the Kashmiris to attain some relief in the circumstances to compensate for living in an environment of religious autonomy. But it did not arouse their natural and historical instinct for political freedom that was rather beyond the practicable realm of its activities. Its main political plank was to oppose the wrongdoings of the authorities and to impress on them that the life of depravity of their victims would incur public opprobrium and insubordination if allowed to grow in proportions. The concept of freedom in its political sense did not, therefore, attract the opposition and the political movement.

This concept came to gain admittance to Kashmir scenario (as we shall see in the 2nd Volume) in the seventh decade of the 20th century as a reaction to a host of variegated political opinions which had divided the Kashmiris into rather small and petty parochial camps. The principal contributory factor to this development was the betrayal of their "leaders" who pushed them into the quagmire of "plebiscite" and imprisoned their psyche in the bandwagon of *izzat-o-abro'* and sold "self-determination" for their personal aggrandizement and ultimately accepted a humiliating climb down in exchange of Chief-Ministership through the medium of "Accord". A conscientious and articulate group of young men found it extremely difficult to reconcile different political views and began seriously to think about their future. The concept of freedom attracted them deeply.

They interpreted this concept to mean independence and publicized it as the only solution to the centuries old problems of subservience and as a means to restore Kashmir's lost national status and identity. They nurtured it as their belief that it was better to die gloriously for freedom than to live in perpetual slavery.

At the core of this new awareness is the lurking urge to revive the Kashmir's historical individuality which was:

> cultivated and articulated by Nila Naga; nurtured and developed by the Harwan and Hutmur cultural formations; broadened and strengthened by Zain-ul-Abidin; fostered and popularized by Nund Rishi and Lal Ded; and successively compromised by the Chaks, the Surfis, and the Dhars; and finally

tailored to suit the needs of India's political and military hegemony by its hench-men: the self-indulgent Sheikhs, the crafty Beighs, the merry-making Bakshis, the crazy Sadiqs, the spine–less Qasims, the flamboyant Abdullahs and the rip-roaring Muftis.

The projection of this individuality through "*Kashmiriat*" is nothing but a histrionic gesture; a sinister move to legitimize the position of the disputed Kashmir as India's peripheral, subservient and sub-national constituency and equate it with *Punjabiat, Bengaliat, Gujratiat, Maharshtriat* etc; the undisputed sub-identities of all pervasive Indian National identity. By proclaiming Kashmir as its integral part and by relentlessly striving to validate the conditional "accession" through holding bogus elections, from time to time, to install local surrogate rulers and to operate through native institutions, India can neither supersede UN resolutions nor hoodwink the international opinion. These elections plus the Indian claims of legitimacy to its continued occupation of Kashmir by reference to the instrument of "accession" and to the State Constituent Assembly, together with the periodic celebration of ceremonies, especially 26th January and 15th August, have failed to create any tangible impact and win India requisite Kashmiri friends and collaborators to perpetuate its hegemony. Even the stationing of above seven lakh regular Indian troops in addition to paramilitary forces has not been able to produce tacit acquiescence to cow the Kashmiris into total submission. As a matter of fact, these tactics have proved counter productive for India. They have impaired the capacity of an overwhelming occupation force to defeat the struggle by a systematic massacre and torture of the Kashmiris in concentration camps and interrogation centers and have, thus, acted as a tonic to energize the Kashmir's struggle for freedom.

Appendix – A

Village Households

The term village household signifies the advent of agricultural life in Kashmir which was characterized by self sustaining rural economy that neither encouraged the separation between agriculture and handicrafts nor stimulated the evolution of markets. The system was bereft of any social division of labour and specialized technical know-how. But it did not resemble Karl Marx's "Village Community" system which expression he has used in the context of pre-colonial history of the subcontinent to denote the absence of private property in land and the responsibility of the State to maintain artificial irrigation; which elements, according to him, together resulted in unchangeableness of the subcontinent before its colonization by the British.

Appendix – B

Urbanization – Separation of Crafts from Agriculture

For want of adequate material we are not in a position to determine the exact date of the commencement of urbanization in Kashmir. However, on the basis of archaeological and numismatic evidence it can be assumed that such a phenomenon must have begun taking shape in Kashmir much before the Harwan culture saw the highest peak of its advancement. The coins of Indo-Greek and Saka kings found in Kashmir point to the existence of a very close commercial and trade relationship between the Valley and the neighbouring countries in the second century B.C . Such a state of affairs was not possible in an environment exclusively characterized by agricultural economy which is specially known for the combination of agriculture and handicrafts.

Large scale commerce, brisk trade and tremendous flow of foreign currency, during the 2nd century B.C., clearly signify the presence of markets in Kashmir which were positive indicators of socio-economic change. These markets would have not come into being without the availability of commodity economy and social surplus and a complex division of labour. In response to these laws of the market, the cottage industry had to sever its relations with agriculture in order to become refined enough to attract foreign customers.

With the passage of time this phenomenon finally paved the way for the evolution of Harwan culture the remains of which bear ample testimony to the mastery Kashmiris had attained in respect of arts and crafts.

Appendix - C

Hutmura Excavation

Till recently Harwan tiles were considered to be the major discovery of the 20th century but the discoveries made through excavations carried by the State Department of Archives, Archeaology & Museums, during my tenure as Director, at different places have, besides pushing this notion to the background, shown us the missing links of the Harwan culture. The discovery of tile pavements at Hutmur, Hoinar and Doonpathri are most conspicuous in this regard. They are of immense significance as they provide us with necessary clues regarding the full-fledged civilization that flourished on the banks of Liddar Valley in the early years of the Christian era.

(See Illustration no.1)

Appendix - D

Discovery of Hords of Coins

Two hordes of copper coins , numbering 137 and 300 respectively, were discovered from Maidan Chogul, Hundwara, district Kupwara during my tenure as Director Archives, Archaeology & Museums(1987-88), which throw considerable light on the socio- economic development of the ancient Kashmir. These coins do not consist of copper alone; other elements too are found in them. This was ascertained through their scientific investigation at the Nuclear Research Laboratory of Babha Atomic Energy Research Centre, Zakura, Srinagar.

An energy Dispersive X-Ray Fluorescence Spectrometer was used for the evaluation of elemental concentration of these coins. Through sophisticated solid state detectors and computer controlled instruments used in a non- destructive manner, the investigation revealed the following elemental composition:

copper	83%
iron	10%
antimony	0.2%
arsenic	0.1%
tin & nickel	0. 2%

These hoards are of great historical and archaeological significance as they enable us to determine the level of socio-economic and cultural formations of the ancient Kashmir.

Appendix – E

Translation of an *Urzie* from the *Choudaris*, Manufacturers, Pandits and the Inhabitants of Kashmir to the British Government

God be praised that He has appointed kings to do justice, and this can not be done by any other but you. It is well known that under your Government the people live in peace without prejudice for or against their religion and without distinction, from this cause your rule has extended from England, even to Hindoostan. People of other countries who have heard of the manner in which you administer justice, desire your Government. We ourselves are very unfortunate in that our country has come under your power. All the world know that we are not employed by any one, but work with our own hands for our livelihood. Although former kings were very kind towards us, yet ,the deceased Sheikh treated us more like sons, after his death his son also behaved in the same way towards us. But the English by giving this country to Raja Golab Singh are oppressing us, his tyranny is so well known, that it needs no explanation, and his ancient subjects are witness to it.

In giving our country to Raja Golab Singh, who fears no God, you are oppressing us, and so breaking your own rule, which is, to do justice.

Because you are doers of justice, and cherishers of your subjects, we beseech you not to oppress us in this way, but to place over us any one but Golab Singh. We will not disobey your orders, but if it be that we are to have him, we shall all run away, both small, and great, subscribed by the seals of two hundred and seventy-five persons."

(True Translation)
Sd|- John Lawrence
Commr. & Superintt.
Jullunder Doab, On duty
at Lahore.

(Foreign Dep't.(NAI), 26 Dec. 1846, No. 1125)

Appendix – F

Was Kashmir Sold to Gulab Singh?

Nothing is more rewarding for a writer than the interest his write-up evokes among various sections of educated people. This is exactly what happened to the present author when he found a series of articles in the English dailies that followed in succession to his article *Kashmir Was Never Sold To Gulab Singh* (*Kashmir Times*, March 27, 1988). The main points raised by the critics of the write-up are:

1) That while writing history the modern historian has to look beyond facts, besides subscribing to the popular view about history;
2) that to depend upon archival or 'official source' is not in keeping with the norms of modern historical research;
3) that the "Sale of Kashmir" resulted in bartering away "the honour, freedom and rights of the Kashmiris."
4) that as a feudatory chief of Jammu, Gulab Singh was not "in a position to pay a huge amount consequent to the failure of the Sikhs to pay the same"; and
5) that the British and Gulab Singh had " no right to determine the fate of Kashmir and the Kashmiris.",and
6) that the " Sale of Kashmir" resulted in " bartering away the rights and freedom

of Kashmiris."

1-2) In support of the first and the second argument a "professional historian", namely Dr. Ishaq Khan has out of context quoted Ibn-Khaldun, Beccker, Dilthey, Croce and Collingwood. But a careful study of the notable works of these illustrious authorities will clearly show that they do not denigrate the importance of facts of history; nor do they over-estimate the role of interpretation in history writing. Facts are as important to them as interpretation.

It can be argued without fear of contradiction that the facts and interpretation are two main aspects of historical research which are so intrinsically and inseparably connected together that to pronounce a divorce between the two is to nullify the very purpose of history writing. After all what does a historian interpret? He interprets the social order which is based on facts. His interpretation does not occur all of a sudden or in vacuum. He studies the facts of the past which are the outcome of the people's action; people's action occurs in social context, not outside it. E.H. Car has rightly observed that history is a "process of interaction, a dialogue between the historian in the present and facts of the past ."

It is obvious, thus, that the interpretation is a very sensitive aspect of historical research. In the hands of a naïve "historian" it can play havoc and ,thus, present before us a distorted and blurred picture of the past. But in the hands of an objective historian it recreates the past in its correct perspective and, thereby, enables the history to prove its inherent quality of deliverer from the undue influences of both past and present environments.

3) Come what may, an objective historian taps all sources of information available to him. Like archaeology, numismatics and iconography, he makes an extensive use of archival source material to dive deep into the ocean of facts which he marshals to interpret them in their correct perspective.

If for a while we agree to avoid the archival source, as suggested by Mr. Khan, then there is no need for spending annually so much on the maintenance and preservation of the archival material housed in the repositories established throughout the world. We shall have to reject all that has been written about Emperor Akbar or Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin by their court chroniclers namely Abul Fazl and Jonaraja. Documents, Treatise, *Farmans* and Revenue Reports constitute the archival material which no historian can afford to ignore while writing history. If any one cavils at this statement and suggests to adopt so-called modern technique, which I believe is a fiction writing technique, to interpret treaties in a dramatic manner so as to suit the" popular view"about history, he is simply betraying his ignorance of the methodology of historical research.

4) As regards Gulab Singh's relations with the British, it was in recognition of his services, which he had rendered to their advantage at critical juncture of their history in India and due to his maneuverings, and also due to his treachery with his Sikh masters, that he was given Kashmir . Apart from being a top ranking *wazir,* he was the most influential and wealthy personage of the Lahore *Darbar* which fact is amply borne by history. According

to one estimate he had amassed corers of *rupees*, silver coins, gold *mohurs* and *jagirs* by underhand means. Besides he held in his possession huge estates, townships and farms in addition to the principality of Jammu. He is also said to have been fined *rupees* three crore, for his contumacious coduct, by Rani Jindan. With such huge wealth it was not impossible for him to pay to the British the war indemnity which was otherwise due to Maharaja Duleep Singh. (See Appendix "H")

5) To pronounce moral judgments on historical events is not within the competence or jurisdiction of a historian because his standpoint is diametrically opposed to that of a moralist. Croce warns the historians about the negative consequences those are likely to occur while mingling morality with history in these words:

> Those who, on the plea of narrating history, bustle about as judges, condemning here and giving absolution there, because they think that this is the office of history are generally recognized as devoid of historical sense.

Thus, if anyone endeavours to determine the moral justification of the Treaty of Amritsar (see Appendix "G") and denounces the transfer of power to Gulab Singh as an act of "betrayal" on the part of the British, he is simply a moralist, literary intellectual and not a historian. It may be remembered that suffering is indigenous to history and history has its casualties as well as its victories.

6) The contention that the so called " Sale-deed" resulted in "bartering away the rights and freedom of Kashmiris" is simply not true. The statement has been made to create an impression that before 1846 A.D., the Kashmiris enjoyed absolute "political freedom". But were the Kashmiris really free before 1846 A.D.? What kind of "freedom" did they enjoy, and how was it molested and annihilated in 1846 A.D.?

These are pertinent questions and need to be viewed in terms of the facts of Kashmir history.

There was no freedom at all in Kashmir and the Kashmiris lived in utter subjugation and slavery of the Lahore *Darbar* which, through its Governors, denuded them of whatever they possessed. The history of Kashmir bears ample testimony to this. The concepts of freedom and democracy are modern in origin; they can not, therefore, be applied to an age which, being feudal in character, was not prepared to accommodate these in its ethos.

The leaders of the organized opposition to the Dogra regime had enough justification to bank upon the "Sale" propaganda as a strategy of political engineering. They portrayed the Treaty of Amritsar as a *"bai-nama"* because it served an entirely modern and a laudable purpose for arousing the Kashmiri feelings against the autocratic rule. Besides, it served as a foci for emotional attraction in case of the common Kashmiris who could not intellectualize the nature and scope of the movement.

(*Kashmir Times*, March, 27, 1988)

Appendix – G

The Treaty of Amritsar, March 16, 1846

Teaty between the British Government on the one part, and Muharaja Golab Singh of Jummoo on the other, concluded, on the part of the British Government, by Frederick Currie, Esq., and Brevet Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence, acting under the orders of the Right Honorable Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., one of Her Britannic Majesty's most Honorable Privy Council, Governor General, appointed by the Honorable Company to direct and control all their affairs in the East Indies, and by Muharaja Golab Singh in person.

Article1. The British Government transfers and makes over, for ever, in independent possession, to Muharaja Golab Singh, and the heirs male of his body, all the hilly or mountainous country, with its dependencies, situated to the eastward of the river Indus, and westward of the river Ravee, including Chumba and excluding Lahool, being part of the territory ceded to the Brithish Government by the Lahore State, according to the provisions of article 4 of the treaty of Lahore, dated March 9th, 1846.

Article 2. The eastern boundary of the tract transferred by the foregoing article to Muharaja Golab Singh shall be laid down by commissioners appointed by the British Government and Muharaja Golab Singh respectively, for that purpose, and shall be defined in a separate engagement, after survey.

Article 3. In consideration of the transfer made to him and his heirs by the provisions of the foregoing articles, Muharaja Golab Singh will pay to the British

Government the sum of seventy-five lacs of rupees (Nanukshahee), fifty lacs to be paid on ratification of this treaty, and twenty-five lacs on or before the 1st of October of the current year, A.D. 1846.

Article 4. The limits of the territories of Muharaja Golab Singh shall not be at any time changed without the concurrence of the Brithsh Government.

Article 5. Muharaja Golab Singh will refer to the arbitration of the British Government any disputes or questions that may arise between himself and the Government of Lahore, or any other neighboring State, and will abide by the decision of the British Government.

Article 6. Muharaja Golab Singh engages for himself and heirs, to join, with the whole of his military force, the British troops, when employed within the hills, or in the territories adjoining his possessions.

Article 7. Muharaja Golab Singh engages never to take, or retain, in his service any British subject, nor the subject of any European or American State, without the consent of the British Government.

Article 8. Muharaja Golab Singh engages to respect, in regard to the territory transferred to him, the provisions of articles 5,6, and 7, of the separate engagement between the British Government and the Lahore Durbar, dated March 11th, 1846.

Article 9. The Brithish Government will give its aid to Muharaja Golab Singh, in protecting his territories from external enemies.

Article 10. Muharaja Golab Singh acknowledges the supremacy of the British Government, and will, in token of such supremacy, present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve perfect shawl goats of approved breed (six male, and six female), and three pairs of Cashmere shawls.

This treaty, consisting of ten articles, has been this day setteled by Frederick Currie, Esq., and Brevet Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence, acting under the directions of the Right Honorable Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., Governor General, on the part of the British Government, and by Muharaja Golab Singh in person; and the said treaty has been this day ratified by the seal of the Right Honorable Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., Governor General.

Done at Umrutsir, this 16th day of March, in the year of our Lord 1846, corresponding with the 17th day of Rubbee-ool-awul, 1262, Hijree.

(Foreign / Dep't. (NAI), 16 th March 1846)

Appendix – H

Did Gulab Singh Pay for Kashmir?

According to the third article of the Treaty of Amritsar, Gulab Singh was required to pay the stipulated sum of seventy-five lakhs of *rupees* in two installments, "fifty lacs... on ratification of this treaty, and twenty-five lacs on or before the 1st of October of the current year, A.D.1846." Some sources, like the anonymous author of *Kashmir-ke-Halaat*, have implied that the British never really collected the required sum from the Dogra ruler. However, there is substantial evidence that, though late, Gulab Singh did pay the amount in full. In a letter dated May 12, 1846 A.D., Hardinge informed Ellenborough, that the Maharaja "has paid his first instalment of 50 lacs." The Governor-General communicated similar information to the Secret Committee in September. Even more important, however, is the following table of payments prepared on October 10, 1848 A.D., by the Company's financial department at Calcutta, which clearly indicates that by the end of July 1848 A.D., Gulab Singh had paid most of his debt:

In 1845/46 A.D.		497,204-4-9
In 1846/47 A.D.		5,619,518-10-0
In 1847/48 A.D.		858,541-12-8
In 1848/49 A.D.		
May	97,997-13-0	
June	48,156-7-6	
July	0-0-0	146,154-4-6
		7,121,481-15-11
Balance due to the Brithish Government on the 31st July 1848 A.D.		378,518-0-14

The rest of the amount, totalling less than four lakhs of *rupees*, was paid by the end of March 1850 A.D., and a copy of "The Final Receipt signed by the members of the Board of Administration of Punjab," is on exhibition at the Punjab Record Office Museum in Lahore.

Appendix – I

The Secret Dispatches of Mirza Saif-ud-Din

These confidential dispatches of Mirza Saif-ud-Din, provide one of the most important sources for the early history of the Dogra rule in Kashmir. Saif-ud-Din was engaged as a *khufia navis* (secret writer). Gulab Singh became aware of his activities soon after he became the Maharaja. Immensely displeased, the Dogra ruler forbade Saif-ud-Din's attendance at his *Darbar*, and confiscated his *jagirs*, but refrained from inflicting further punishment for fear of infuriating the informer's employers. In 1848 A.D., Gulab Singh accused him of reporting news "right and wrong, true and false." Five years later the Kashmir ruler was delighted to learn that the British authorities were contemplating the termination of Saif-ud-Din's services because of postal delays in receiving his reports. But his relief was only temporary. Saif-ud-Din's dispatches continued and so did Gulab Singh's discomfiture. As late as 1857A.D., the Maharaja remained unreconciled to the presence of the Company's spy in his capital and asked his Prime Minister, Jawala Sahai, "to get this seditious and imprudent man dismissed from British service by any possible means."

Saif-ud-Din had the unenviable position not only of being stigmatized for being in the pay of the British but also of living under constant fear of reprisal at the hands of the Maharaja. He often complained of official harassment. At one time he begged the British to secure him employment outside Kashmir and wrote: "The displeasure of the ruler has made it impossible for me to live here."

Saif-ud-Din's dispatches capture in minute detail the everyday occurences during the entire reign of Gulab Singh and the first few years of Ranbir Singh's rule. The information in his communications is arranged in chronological order. Each dispatch either bears a specific date or refers to the months it covers.

GLOSSARY

Of Arabic(A), English(E), Hindustani(H), Kashmiri(K), Persian(P) and Sanskrit(S) words and idioms used in the book.

agrahara	(S) a benefice to influential people
Akbar	(A) great
alakaband	(P) reeler
Alim	(P) scholar
Allah	(A) God
Allah-o-Akbar	(A) God is great
al shal	(A) shawl
alwand	(P) embroidery
amin	(P) trustworthy
amil	(P) supervisor of revenue administration
amir	(P) title of a military commander, governor or prince
ashrafi	(P) gold coin
Amir al-muminin	(P) commander of the faith
Anjuman	(P) Assembly
asali	(H) original
astan	(K) shrine
bakhshi	(P) a provincial administrator
bang	(K) call to prayer
Bebuj- Raj	(K) brazen savagery
begar	(K) forced labour
Bhairava	(S) Shiva, the Hindu god
Bhakti	(H) divine love
Bhutta land	(K) Tibet
bitikchi	(P) revenue official or a village official
Bodhisattva	(S) emanation of Buddha
burqa	(P) veil worn by Kashmiri Muslim women
carvan	(P) company travelling together across the desert
choudhari	(H) *pargana* official or a provincial official
Collective-consciousness	(E) one mass of thought
Community-consciousness	(E) one mass of consciousness
collie	(H) load carrier
daf	(P) drum

dag-i-shawl	(P) custom duty on shawls
dalal	(K) middleman
Damara	(S) land holder; also signifies a land grabber
Darul-harab	(A) territory not under Islamic law and subject to conquest by Muslims
Darul-Islam	(A) lands where Islamic law prevails
Darbar	(p) a court
darogah	(P) superintendent
darwaza	(H) door
dervish	(P) a saint
dewan	(P) collection of peotry
dihqan	(P) a peasant
dinnar	(S) coined money or cash
diwan	(P) a government official who keeps tax and revenue records.
Domba	(K) a low caste of menials
dranga	(S) a watch station for the purpose of guarding the approaches to the Valley and of collecting custom duty
dvara	(S) a watch station, mountain pass or a gate
dvaradipa	(S) in charge of frontier pass
dvarapti	(S) "Lord of the gate"
ekka	(H) a small one horse carriage
Ekenga	(S) a body of military organization
Elaborate marketing	(E) exactness of the system of managing an undertaking involving a comprehensive accounting of the process taking place in the market
Exploitation	(E) appropriation of surplus and at times of a part of the necessary labour of the direct producer
fakir	(P) mendicant
fana	(P) annihilation of the self in *Sufi* usage
fatwa	(A) an opinion on Islamic law given by a *mufti*
firman	(P) command
fotadar	(P) a treasury officer
ghazal	(P & A) love song; an Arabic poetic form passes with variations into Persian, and Urdu Poetry
ghazi	(P) warrior for the faith

Hadith	(A) sayings of prophet Mohammad (SAW)
hafiza	(P) dancing girl
hakim	(P) a physician
hamam	(P) warm bath room
hanji	(H) boatman
hanz	(K) boatman
harem	(P) a royal apartment of women
hartal	(H) strike
hatta	(S) market
Hindutva	(S) Hindu fundamentalism
hundi	(H) a letter of credit, or bill of exchange
Id	(A) the Muslim festival; *Id al-Fitr*, the breaking of the fast of *Ramadan*, and *Id al-Adha*, the sacrificial festival of the tenth of *Dh al-hijja*
Imam	(A) the leader of the Muslim community; the *Shias* use it for Hazrat Ali
Iman	(A) faith, belief
Islam	(A) unconditional surrender to God
jagir	(P) revenue assignment, land grant
jagirdar	(P) landlord
jalakdoz	(K) embroider
Jama	(A) mosque for Friday prayers
Jihad	(A) striving, crusade
Jizia	(A) the poll tax levied on non-Muslims in a Muslim ruled society
Kaba	(A) the central sanctuary of Islam located in Macca, the principal object of the *Hajj*
Kafir	(P) an unbeliever
kahcharai	(K) the village common land
Karewa	(K) foot hill
Karkhana	(H-P) a factory
karkhandar	(P) factory owner
Kashmiriat	(K) a concept to project Kashmir as a constituency of India to dilute its disputed status
kayasthas	(S) clerks, officials
kemanchah	(P) violin
Khalafat	(A) the institution of the successor of the Prophet
Khalifa	(A) successor of the Prophet
Khalasa	(P) a Sikh

khalisa	(P) the village land from which the State directly collected the revenue
khandawaw	(K) a nick name given to the Kaashmiri artisans
khan-i-saman	(P) high steward
Khankah	(P) a monastery, a building for *Sufi* activities
kharwar	(H) an ass load, weighing two maunds corresponding to 177
khar	(K) a *kharwar*
khilat	(P) a robe of honour
khowja	(P) a lord, a title variously used by merchants, scholars, and officials
khushroz-bazar	(P) fancy market
kul	(K) stream, canal
kotwal	(H) a police officer
Langer- Khana	(P) the public charity kitchen
Labour power	(E) the totality of workmen's physical and mental abilities used in material production
Labour productivity	(E) effectiveness of concrete labour
Lavanya	(S) trible section, modern Lone caste
madadimash	(P) the land grant conferred upon men of letters
madrasa	(P) a school whose primary function is the teaching of Islamic subjects
mahalla	(P) a town quarter
Malik	(P) a hereditary chief who collected revenue and guarded the passes
mantra	(S) the Hindu mystic formula
mansabdar	(P) holder of an office of power and dignity
maqadam	(K) a village official, an intermediary of revenue system
margapati	(S) lord of the passes
masjid	(A) a mosque
masnavi	(P) an epic poem in Persian & related literatures
mawali	(A) a client, servant, and also an alien
maya	(S) cosmic illusion
Migration of artisans	(E) movement of artisans from Kashmir to Punjab in search of work and better living conditions
Mir Bahri	(P) chief of the river transport system
Mleechas	(S) the aliens, a term signifying the Muslims
moulvi	(A) a doctor of Muslim law

mamalat	(A) Muslim law pertaining to social relations
mufti	(A) an expert in Muslim law qualified to give authoritative legal opinions
muhtasib	(P) a collector of fines imposed upon defaulters
mukti	(S) liberation
mullah	(A) a learned man
murid	(P) a disciple
murshid	(A) a guide
nadru	(K) leaf- stem of nilum-bum specicosum
Nagas	(S) name of the tribe who inhabited Kashmir after driving away the *Pissacas*
nimaz	(A) prayer
nangar	(K) a village artisan or a landless labourer
naqib	(P) a headman
nazrana	(H) a gift
nayik	(H) a military official
nikah	(A) marriage contract
pao	(K) quarter of a *seer*
pardah	(H) a veil
Parvati	(S) wife of Shiva
pashm	(P) wool
pashmina	(P) soft wool
patta	(S) a tract of land, measuring one *bigah*
pattu	(K) coarse woolen rug
patwari	(P) a hereditary village accountant
pharewalla	(K) a hawker
phiron	(K) a long loose wrapper/gown
pir or peer	(P) a title for a religious guide
pirzada	(P) the descendant of a *peer*
Pissacas	(S) name of the tribe who inhabited Kashmir before the *Nagas*
purohit	(S) a priest
qazee	(A) a judge
Quran	(A) the Holy Book, containing the revelations of God to Prophet Muhammad (SAW)
refugar	(P) darner
rahdari	(P) permit for leaving the territories of Kashmir
rais	(P) a headman or chief
Ramadan	(A) the month of annual fasting
rasum-i-nikah	(P) marriage tax
rudhabharodhi	(S) *begar* or corvee

Sabha	(S) a council
sadabaf	(P) a weaver
sarai	(P) inn
sarhiad	(K) an artisan living outside the city
Sarkar	(H) government
Satisar	(S) a lake
Sayyids	(A) descendants of Hazrat Ali
seer	(H) a *seer* weighs two lb
shali	(H) grain
shawl-baf	(P) shawl weaver
Shia	(A) a sect of Muslims
singhara	(H) waternut
sirdarakhti	(P) a levy
sivrarti	(S) a festival of Shiva
Sufi	(A) a Muslim mystic
Sultan	(P) the title of a Muslim monarch
Sunna	(A) the practice of the Prophet
Sunni	(A) a sect of Muslims who accept the *Sunna* and the historical succession of *Khalifa*
tahvildar	(P) a boatman
talimgur	(K) a writer of guidelines for shawl making
Tantra	(S) scriptual works; religious treatise
taqavi	(P) a loan
tazia	(A) the mourning for Hussain displayed in processions in the month of *Muharram*
thanedar	(H) a police officer
tirtha	(S) a shrine
tonga	(H) a light two wheel Indian vehicle
tsat	(K) a pupil
tsathal	(K) a school; a training centre
ulama	(A) the scholars of law and religion of Islam
umara	(P) nobility
urs	(K) festival
urzie	(H) petition
ustad	(H) a teacher
Veth	(K) Jehlum river
Village household system	(E) a socio-economic system distinctly marked by the integration of agriculture and industrial activities ; an undifferentiated socio-economic order
Vitasta	(S) Jehlum river
Yoga	(S) mystical union

Zakat	(A) a legal alms tax raised from Muslims
zamindar	(P) a land owner, a person with a right to collect revenue
zar-i-ashkhas	(P) chimney tax
zar-i-hubbah	(P) grain tax
zar -i-naiz	(P) presentation tax
zar - i - nikah	(P) wedding tax
zulm	(H) tyranny
zulm - parast	(H) worshipper of tyranny

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The following abbreviations are used in the bibliography:

Adm-Rept	Administration Report
Ed.	Edited
Ency-Brit	Encyclopedia Britannica
Eng	English
F/P	Foreign Political
F/Sec	Foreign Secret Consultation
JIH	Journal of Indian History
J&K	Jammu & Kashmir
JRASB	Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, Bengal
JRASL	Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, London
NAI	National Archives of India
Tr.	Translation

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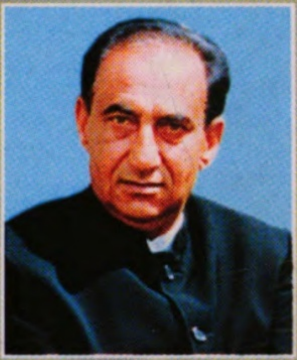

Born in a Kashmiri Muslim family, Dr. Ahad inherited a rich intellectual legacy of his grandfather, Amma Joo, popularly known as Amma Baba; a great revolutionary of his times who contributed immensely to the Silk Factory agitation and brought the labour problems into focus when his famous poem:

Tumhara zar hamara sar
doo cheezu say bani hai mill
naffa kay doo hesay karna
braber hai braber hai

not only aroused the workmen's conscience but also disturbed the sleep of their exploiters.

Dr. Ahad's passionate craving for learning was further intensified, first by the academic benevolence of Tyndale Biscoe Mission School, Fateh Kadal, and later under the able guidance of teachers at the Multipurpose Higher Secondary School, Bagh-i-Dilawer Khan, Fateh Kadal, Srinagar. He graduated from S. P. College, Srinagar and joined Kashmir University to pursue P. G. studies and, subsequently, research course leading to the completion of his PhD, Degree.

He started his career as a lecturer in 1973 and taught history at Amar Singh College, Srinagar nearly for about four years during which period he shot to prominence for his graceful, skilful and inimitable style of writing on Kashmir affairs and came to be widely respected as a sensitive writer, with a rare combination of scholarship and objectivity, through journals of national and international repute especially: *Islam & The Modern Age*, Jamia Milia, New Delhi; *Islamic Perspective*, Mumbai. His *Kashmir to Frankfurt: A Study of Arts & Crafts*, published in 1986-87 to overwhelming acclaim as a monumental work, continues to enjoy the credibility of a thoughtful original work and masterpiece of socio-economic history of Kashmir. Containing many remarkable insights into the cultural formations and production relations obtaining in Kashmir at various periods of its history, it earned a distinction of being the best book of that year on Kashmir and opened up new vistas and opportunities for the author to handle more important assignments of Director- Archives, Archaeology & Museums, Director- Research & Public Libraries, Additional Secretary to Government, Special Secretary to Government, Secretary to Government and Commissioner Secretary to Government. He also provided a brilliant and analytical account of administration when he wrote: *Level Jumping Justified & Transparency in Administration.*

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